CELEBRATING

ALBERTA'S FAMILIES

The Lieutenant-Governor's Conference - Celebrating Alberta's Families

Edmonton, Alberta
February 19-21, 1990

Metis Families

The judgements and opinions contained in this report are solely the views of the author and do not necessarily represent the position of the Alberta Government.

Metis Nation of Alberta

Metis Children's Services Society

Alberta
GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

92-00933/

April 27, 1990

Mr. Larry Desmeules
President
Metis Association of Alberta
#123, 12520 St. Albert Trail
Edmonton, Alberta
T5L 4H4

Dear Mr. Desmeules:

On behalf of all those who participated; contributed; and assisted in coordinating MAA participation at the Lieutenant-Governor's Conference on Alberta's Families: we are pleased to submit to you our Report and Recommendations.

We were given the responsibility by the MAA Board for coordinating the Metis participation at the Lieutenant-Governor's Conference; organizing the MAA/MCS workshop on Metis Families; and preparing a study paper and research project on Metis families.

We are pleased to report that nineteen Metis delegates from all across the province attended the Lieutenant-Governor's Conference on Family, on February 20 - 21/90. The Conference brought together for the first time representatives nominated by each of the six Zones to discuss the future direction for Metis families. Although the Conference itself did not create an ideal forum for participants to bring to light issues specific to Metis families; the significant Metis presence at the Conference created an impact with Conference organizers.

The active role that the Metis Association played in ensuring adequate representation, and their lobbying to have representation on the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families is a clear cut indication of their concern in this area. We believe the willingness of the organizers to accommodate our numbers is an indication of their desire to acknowledge and recognize issues of concern unique to the Metis community. The Provincial government's positive response to the MAA in appointing a representative to the Premier's Council is a further indication of this desire.

The workshop on Metis Families, concurrent to the Conference, was organized in anticipation of our concerns that the Conference would not provide an adequate forum to bring to light to government and the general public the numerous issues affecting our Metis families. This workshop was attended by over 40 participants. Given the limited time we had and the wide-ranging issues, this workshop has only begun to touch on the issues.

The study paper and research project presented in this report are intended to stimulate discussions and begin the process for future resolutions.

Our report and our recommendations reflect the need for the Metis community to participate in the development of solutions affecting their families. Our primary recommendation is that a Conference be organized by the Metis Association to more clearly identify the real issues and concerns of Metis families in the Province.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you and the Board of Directors for the support, encouragement and assistance which you have provided to this project. We are very encouraged that with representation on the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, we can influence the agenda for Metis families in the future.

Respectfully submitted,

Fred Anderson

Fred Anderson
Sector Advisor
Social Services
Metis Association

C Pettifer

Carolyn Pettifer
Executive Director
Metis Children's Services

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Part I

The Impact of a Changing Society on the Metis Family

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THE IMPACT OF A CHANGING SOCIETY ON THE METIS FAMILY

INTRODUCTION

Although many Metis families today are united and lead healthy lives, there are a great number of others who have not made the necessary adjustments needed to survive in a changing society.

Metis families are much more likely to live a disadvantaged life with many hardships. The Metis family is under increasing pressure created by the stresses of daily living. The effects of stress show up in a clear and unmistakable fashion in child welfare, criminal justice and suicide statistics. Marriage breakdown is evident in Metis communities, accompanied with emotional instability and children in poverty. It is estimated that over 40% of child welfare cases are of Metis or Indian descent compared to 5% according to population ratios in Alberta.

Today, as our lives become increasingly complex, Metis children, families, and communities are finding themselves caught in a web of social dilemmas. In an attempt to understand and begin to address the impact of a changing society, we need to ask "How did we get to be this way?" and equally important, "What are we going to do about it?"

The term family is sometimes hard to define; it can take many meanings and forms. In a changing society, the role of the Metis family also evolves. These changes come about in family function, expectations, standards and values. This is in response to the sweeping social, economic and political developments.

Anthropologists and historians have identified a number of distinct cultures, groups of people with ways of life so different from one another they are regarded as separate cultures. Gordon (1978:366) noted that within each of these thousands of cultures there has evolved a different version of the family. Within a generic context, it is usually defined as meaning 1 mother plus 1 father plus 2.5 children equals a contemporary family unit. However, this term fails to recognize the nature of the Metis community and its distinct extended family ties. It is important that Metis people themselves begin to define Metis family based on personal experiences, general perceptions and existing research developed by Metis individuals.

In his book *In The Best Interests Of The Metis Child* (1988), Metis author Clem Chartier underscores the need to focus on the well-being of the Metis family and on factors which will determine the feasibility of building a better life for Metis children.

Issues such as unemployment, alcohol and drug abuse, suicide, lack of adequate housing, quality of education, lack of economic opportunity, the justice system, sports and recreation, denial of the use of traditional resources, racism, youth in conflict with the law and other related areas must be acknowledged and addressed. Our project has sought the experiences of the Metis family in each of these areas. To realize that the relationship between these factors form a complex web of influences which affect Metis families is critical.

This paper is intended as a working document. It is presented in the spirit of integrity. It discusses the overall historical barriers. It is not intended to evaluate the impact of history of intervention into Metis families, but to look at what impacts Metis families today. An awareness of the past is important for the building of healthy children, families and communities.

A HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Family problems are not discrete; they are interdependent on one another. In the past, Metis history has been characterized by loss of land rights and by government denial of the special status and self-governing rights. All of the consideration mentioned above must be viewed within a historical context. It is necessary to see how the past affects our lives today. School books, cowboy and Indian movies and other literature provide a one-sided viewpoint of Canada in the early days. Our grandparents tell us that this is not a true vision. Our story must be told and we must begin to question the early beliefs of "civilization." Equally important, we must examine the motives behind these beliefs.

Said one leader in the Edmonton Metis community, "Many of our families are more familiar with other cultures than with our own." Pettifer (1989:5) voiced her concern at a multicultural conference, where she attributed the loss of culture and identity to the early intervention into Metis family life. Policies of assimilation were carried out in the educational efforts and religious teachings aimed at children.

For many Metis families, the ideal of social equality, even of a decent life, is beyond their perception. The Metis National Council Report (1985) maintains that "Perhaps worst of all, for it is the hardest to reverse, is the colonial attitudes and policies that had a devastating psychological impact on our people. The denial of our heritage, the attempts by the clergy to suppress our language and ridicule our parents' traditions, the all too obvious fact that white people had all the power and privileges, all these things contributed to what many of our leaders have referred to as the "inferiorization" of Indigenous people, the acceptance as fact of the negative stereotypes which still plague us in today's society. (1985/86:8) First Metis land was taken away; we will find that Metis children were next on the agenda.

If one stepped into a Metis time machine and went back to 1830, it would be common to find immediate and extended family within one household. Children would be the responsibility of the parents, and if they were unable to provide care, then relatives would automatically assume that responsibility. The Metis community also played an important role in supporting families.

Metis children learned skills and expected behavior from watching and listening to older members of the family. Children were loved, cared for, disciplined, and had a sense of security and pride in their Metis identity. In general, the quality of family life was high; families were healthy, united, and strong.

Despite the influence of immigrant settlers with their foreign accents and different ways of life, Metis families attempted to adapt to the rapid changes. At this time mission schools were introduced. This was the beginning of the paralyzing and immobilizing effect of the policy of education on the Metis child, family, and community.

The government gave power and authority to the churches in an effort to establish missions schools. It was believed by the newly settled white population that Metis, Indian and Inuit children needed to be "civilized". In order to civilize these children effectively, it was necessary to remove them as much as possible from their own culture, their parents, and ways of life. It was also believed that the aim of these measures was to erase/eradicate aboriginal people as a distinct culture and political group.

Because Metis children were taught a way of life and work foreign to the immigrants' culture and origins, many of these children who grew into adulthood became ashamed of their identity and culture. Further, many of these mission children experienced little nurturing from their own families so they didn't learn appropriate parenting skills. The structure and quality of Metis family life was hurt as the next generations were also separated by distance and values.

What was the government's thinking, values and beliefs during these early days?

According to authors Sealy and Lussier (1975 p:111-113), they maintain that the federal government saw in the West a wealth of resources, particularly farm products. The West was to be settled by farmers who produced grain and beef to be exchanged for manufactured goods from the East. To reach this goal, the federal government wanted to settle the West quickly by building a cross-country railway to carry goods. As a part of this plan, the government set up the homestead system so settlers could obtain land by farming it. They gave large grants to railway companies to encourage building of railways. They also gave land grants to colonization companies so they could bring in more settlers.

The federal government wanted a free hand in their plans to settle the West. They did not want to have to negotiate with a Metis nation within Canada so they denied that the Metis were a nation, and tried to force through their own plans for the West without consulting the people who lived there.

Eventually, all these policies and educational efforts were seen by the federal government to have failed. However, welcome to the birth of "child welfare" services, through which separation of Metis children from their parents continues today. Many aboriginal children taken into care during the 1960s and 1970s neither returned home nor were adopted but developed into victims of institutionalization.

Many Metis children who have been or are lost in the system generally experience some form of identity problem. In addition to feelings of severe depression in both children and parents, the family is unable to restore itself and to become reunited. Despair and self-destructive behavior become a part of a pattern for many. In time the child learns the techniques of institutional survival.

Believing many parents today are the product of these foreign systems, Lucille McLeod maintains, "we must begin to regain our individual self-worth. People should realize their power." McLeod insists, "we are a very valuable people and we have to realize our worth, raise our awareness to this, and then look at all our wonderful potential because we have the potential to accomplish whatever it is we want to do." Believing it is "everybody's right to have the opportunity to develop to their fullest potential," she adds, "sometimes we don't have that opportunity." (Second Metis National Child Care Conference, 1988)

With this in mind, what are we going to do about it?

The Metis community continues to do some soul searching. In our efforts, we have begun the healing process of overcoming the many hardships we've inherited from the past. We realize and recognize the great potential of the Metis community, such that it becomes our responsibility in partnership with government and others, to help Metis families and communities act to achieve that potential.

WHO ARE THE METIS?

Most Canadians have a vague image of Metis. When was the last time someone said, "You don't look Metis?" Following a lengthy discussion of who are the Metis, you either feel offended by their blindness or discouraged because they still won't acknowledge the unique and distinctness of Metis. The invisibility and lack of recognition of Canada's forgotten people develops a meaning.

The concept of "Metisism" has long been misunderstood. We have been looked at as the "other Natives" - a forgotten people. Oftentimes we fall into the gaps of service delivery, policies and legislation. This is so true today that most systems do not specify programs or policy as Metis. For example, statistically the Metis are masked under the category of "other". This means that Metis people hidden in this category do not reflect an accurate count of the Metis community. This applies to Canada census figures, child welfare records, medical examiners files, criminal justice statistics, school numbers, and other institutional counts.

How can authors write about the Metis unless there is a people and culture to write about? For the purpose of this paper we define Metis as it has been determined by the Metis National Council, Metis Association of Alberta and Federation of Metis Settlements.

Metis National Council

(1) The Metis are:

* an aboriginal people distinct from Indian and Inuit;

* descendants of the historic Metis who evolved in what is now western Canada as a people with a common political will;

* descendants of those aboriginal peoples who have been absorbed by the historic Metis.

(2) The Metis Community comprises members of the above who share a common cultural identity and political will.

The Metis Association of Alberta define Metis as follows:

A Metis is an aboriginal person who:

* declares himself/herself to be a Metis person;

* can produce satisfactory historical or acceptable proof that he/she is Metis;

* has traditionally held himself/herself out to be Metis;

* is accepted by the Metis community as a Metis.

Federation of Metis Settlements definition:

An individual of aboriginal ancestry who identifies with Metis history and culture.

In a presentation entitled, "What is the Impact of other Cultures on Family Life in Alberta?" (1989), Carolyn Pettifer conveys her sentiments about the Metis perspective.

> We are born of two cultures,
> We are distinct - a product of two cultures,

We are not Indian,
We are not European,
We have given rise to our own,
We are Metis.

"We are an indigenous people who want and desire to be recognized." Pettifer further emphasized that the Metis people evolved in Canada as a nation. Sympathizing with the struggles faced by differing cultural groups immigrating to Canada, she explained that the Metis have been, "Fighting for a much longer time to have their rightful place in Canada."

There are various valid ways in which one could define the term "Metisism." There is the Metis organizational definition, the government definition, the Indian Act and dictionary meaning, self-description, etc. As well as within some of these specific definitions, one may find other extensions. Within the confines of "self-definitions," regional, social, educational, economic and cultural disparities may exist.

Metisism can create confusion between Metis and Indian people. For instance, genetically an individual may be Metis, however through self-identification, that individual may declare herself as Indian because she lives the daily struggle and experiences of the Indian culture. This situation is found to be more common in rural northern Alberta. An individual who is genetically Indian and declares herself to be Indian could say that there is no such thing as Metis, "You're either Indian or you're not." Recognizing that cultures are constantly in a state of flux, we would like to present some factors that constitute Metis.

The connotation of Metis has referred specifically to people of Indian and European ancestry. This term became all inclusive. Whether one used the term Metis or half-breed, an individual was looked upon as someone of mixed origin, at least a part of which was comprised of Indian lineage.

This notion of having Indian lineage is a historical concept used by governments in the past and today. They define Metis on racial criteria, meaning anyone of Indian and European mixed blood. It is estimated that a list of those Canadians with at least one Native ancestor in their family tree would include 40% of the French-Canadian population. Also in English speaking Canada, this list would include people like former Premier Peter Lougheed, former Assistant Deputy Minister John LaFrance and musician Robbie Robertson.

Because the dictionary definition, "one of mixed blood" (Webster's 1987:748) fails to recognize the Metis as having a common community, history or political consciousness. The Metis community is provoked and adamantly states, "we are not dictionary Metis."

When we look back to the first Metis people of Canada, it becomes clear that for generations the Metis have been conscious of this "uniqueness." The Metis of both English and of the French origin developed separate cultures that were "distinct" and in conflict with each other.

The Metis played a vital economic role in the fur trade. They were both fur-traders and fur-trappers. They were the guides and interpreters for other fur-traders and explorers. They were the freighters, carrying goods from Winnipeg throughout the Northwest. Not only were they the great buffalo hunters who provided for the trading posts, but they were also pioneers of the Red River Settlement.

The French Metis developed a strong bond of unity based largely on a communal lifestyle and staunch Catholic faith. The great buffalo hunts,

held twice a year, were a major part of the social and economic fabric of Metis society, particularly for the French Metis (Harrison, 1985:21). These hunts provided a viable business venture as well as a generous food supply for the community and others. Records for 1840 show that 1,210 carts and 1,630 Metis people including entire families prepared and organized for the two month adventure that year.

The traditional fiddle and Red River jig were part of Metis celebrations. The fiddle was inherited from the Scottish and French ancestors, while the Red River jig included elements of traditional Indian dancing. The jigs and reels came from both the French and Scottish. Dances were energetic and competitive even up to a point of wearing out a pair of moccasins (Harrison, 1985:26)!

The majority of English half-breeds were staunch Anglicans, and the Scottish mixed-blood strict Presbyterian. Added to these Christian beliefs were elements of Indian beliefs. These Metis adapted a lifestyle more related to agriculture or business.

During the late 19th century, life in general for the Metis was a peaceful and happy time. One author who maintains this position is A.H. de Tremaudan (1982:11, 12) who refers to the Metis in the following manner:

> Family life was respected, morals were of high standard, honesty and charity were a religion. The first Metis Settlements were like a large family where peace, hospitality and comradeship reigned. Nothing was neglected to maintain friendly relations with their Indian cousins; nothing was spared to live good neighbors with the colonists of various nationalities who came to settle in their native land.
>
> Within their community, the Metis people enjoyed a regime of liberty and equality, a sort of simple, equitable communism based above all on the interests of the majority.

For aboriginal people, land is much more than a source of profit and a commodity for wealth creation. Their attachment to the land is part of a spiritual relationship with the universe, its elements and its creatures. Aboriginal title pertains to the historical connection that Metis people have always had; a special interrelationship of land with all aspects of life - language, culture, economic, and political systems (Pelletier, 1974:101,102).

The Metis are for the most part a forgotten people who have historically played an important role during the development of the early Canadian West. Land compensation for the Metis was established during Canadian Confederation, including a Metis List of Rights, but unfortunately the government had its own plan in this regard.

Little is emphasized about how the government and land speculators manipulated the Metis unscrupulously, forcing a different way of life on the Metis. Since the early history and development of Rupert's Land, concerned Metis people have had to struggle and demand justice.

A resistance, a railway and a script program were to have both dramatic and long lasting devastating effects for the Metis families and communities. The Northwest Resistance of 1885, formerly known as Northwest Rebellion, has numerous and contradictory meanings for Metis people. The Metis desired better conditions and more rights within Canada. The Metis stood up for their rights and for justice.

History books talk about Metis' two great struggles with the government as "rebellions", but these were really armed feats of resistance in 1869

at Red River and in 1885 in Saskatchewan. In the hasty push to settle the West, the federal government ignored the demands of the Metis who asked for secure title to their lands. In 1885, this concern became even more pressing as federal plans for homesteading and railways were underway. These plans meant that the Metis were to lose their land and their traditional ways of making a living.

In the aftermath of these government actions the Metis faced demoralization, economic misery, social rejection and the breaking up of a healthy, determined and strong nation. Metis people moved westward in hopes of new dreams and a vision for democratic and economic rights.

This dramatic change profoundly shaped Metis life. In spite of these harsh realities Metis culture persevered. The Metis with a strong set of principles and beliefs, continued to practice common traditions, religions and customs. Metis culture and identity has been a case of blending more than one culture, making it unique and distinct.

The resistance of 1885 and the Battle of Batoche are an expression of Metis community, Metis identity, and Metis nation. These historic events are a symbol of heroic struggle for democratic and economic rights. Symbolic hero and Metis leader, Louis Riel, sacrificed his life in order to maintain his principles and beliefs as a member of the Metis nation. Every year on November 16th, the Metis recognize and pay tribute to his strong Metis integrity.

In the 1900s, the conditions of the Metis people deteriorated even further. Starting in 1929 the Great Depression began. Its effects lasted in Canada until the early 1940s. Many of the Metis families, who were poor before the depression, were greatly impacted by this economic downturn. Social and economic conditions were dismal. Health, education and social welfare became issues for the Metis people of Alberta.

Through the efforts of the "Big Five", Joe Dion, Malcolm Norris, Felix Callihoo, Peter Tomkins and Jim Brady, the Metis movement developed into what is now the Metis Association of Alberta. During the early 1930s they petitioned the provincial government for land.

In 1932, the "Big Five" formed the Metis organization. By 1934, there were 41 Metis Local organizations in Alberta with a total membership of just over 1,200 people. Through province wide meetings, the 3 major issues of concern were identified as conditions of health, education and social welfare.

In 1934, the government of Alberta, in response to the request for help and assistance from the Metis Association, began an inquiry into the conditions of the Metis. In 1936, the Ewing Commission recommended that lands be set aside for Metis in Alberta.

In 1938, the Alberta government took the advice of the Commission and passed the Metis Population Betterment Act. The Metis Population Betterment Act of 1938 established Metis Settlements with their own local governments (Metis Land Rights In Alberta, 1981:47).

After decades of having little or no access to Metis history, the 1960s was a period of Metis cultural reawakening. This historical rejuvenation is viewed by most Metis as a critical element in the healing process of overcoming the effects of democratic and social injustices. In consideration of Metisism, much has yet to be written from a Metis perspective. It is encouraged that Metis authors and historians preserve and promote Metisism in light of improving the social, political and cultural fabric of Canada as a whole.

Today, the Metis continue to voice their concerns with respect to attaining better socio-economic conditions and political rights, including the right to land and self-government. A lot of this activity came to the fore-front as a result of the patriation (bringing home) of the Canadian Constitution in 1982.

Under the terms of the Constitutional Accord of 1983, the Canada Act was passed in which "existing aboriginal and treaty rights" of Native people were recognized, and the term "aboriginal people of Canada" was identified to include "Indian, Inuit and Metis" (Canadian Constitution 1983). In December of 1981, Canadians witnessed historic events when the House of Commons and the Senate approved addresses to Her Majesty the Queen requesting "patriation" of the Canadian Constitution (Metis National Council, 1984).

In March of 1983, the first of a series of Constitutional Conferences enabled the Metis to form the Metis National Council (MNC). The MNC has become the national voice and representative of the Metis people of Canada. The MNC is striving for the political, legal and constitutional recognition and guarantees of the right of the Metis people, including the rights to a land and resource base and self-government institutions (Metis National Council -Constitutional Committee document, 1983).

At the March 1984 First Ministers' Conference, discussions with Federal/Provincial officials and ministers on Metis Constitutional Rights got bogged down on the questions: "Who are the Metis?" "Where are the Metis?" and "How many Metis are there?"

In addition to the identity question of exactly who are the Metis, Clem Chartier, a Metis lawyer, focused on the unresolved and much disputed jurisdictional question of who is responsible for the Metis. "In Canadian law, we as Metis have a problem. The government is using us as a catch all, as a blanket, for all those people who don't fit under the Indian Act. We're (MNC) saying, "that's not right, you can't through your laws, legislation or policy rewrite history. You can't legislate us away." (First National Metis Child Welfare Conference Report, 1987)

In April 1984 the MAA met with Premier Lougheed. The issue of Federal or Provincial jurisdiction arose with the Premier issuing an ultimatum for the MAA to decide which jurisdiction they wanted to come under. If the MAA choose Federal jurisdiction, all Provincial services affecting the Metis would be cut off. The MAA could be cut off from the government. The MAA wished to deal with both governments. (MAA, 1984)

In a letter dated June 19, 1984, addressed to the former Minister responsible for Native Affairs, Milt Pahl, former MAA President Sam Sinclair, reaffirmed that "It is not a question of federal or provincial jurisdiction over Metis, rather it is a question of how much jurisdiction will be exercised by the Metis through the delegation of the authority by both the Federal and Provincial governments to Metis self-governing institutions."

On June 3 1985, the Alberta Legislature adopted a resolution concerning an Amendment to the Alberta Act. Resolution 18 endorsed a commitment of the Government of Alberta to give constitutional protection to the land title of the Metis Settlements of Alberta once the Metis Betterment Act, a provincial statute, was revised to include "appropriate criteria for settlement membership, land allocation, and the composition of governing bodies capable of holding land". It also recognized the principle that the Metis people of Alberta should define and propose fair and democratic criteria in these matters (Metis Self-Government in Alberta, 1986).

In July 1986, the Alberta Federation of Metis Settlements Association responded to Resolution 18 with the release of proposals for new legislation (by means of conferences and negotiations we ensure our rights). Accordingly the MAA presented the "Principles and Parameters of Metis Self-Government in Alberta." It was prepared from the work the MAA and the MSC had done for the constitutional process. This paper outlined the critical elements of self-government agreements which the MAA believes should be given constitutional protection.

The MAA informed the Province that it will need adequate resources and a process to involve its membership in the review and reform of the provincial legislation which affects the entire Metis population of Alberta.

The inception of the "Principles and Parameters," Metis Self-Government in Alberta (1986) eventually gave birth to the Framework Agreement.

FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT

The essence of the Framework Agreement is to promote and facilitate the increased involvement of Metis people throughout Alberta so as to realise the positive developments on matters of concern.

The objectives of the Framework Agreement are to:

- Promote joint planning and joint action between the Minister and the Association in the following areas:

  i. Education/Advanced Education/Career Development and Employment;
  ii. Family and Social Services;
  iii. Forestry, Lands, and Wildlife;
  iv. Economic Development and Trade;
  v. Municipal Affairs

- Strengthen multi-department coordination within the government of the Province of Alberta.

- Pursue maximum and effective utilization of existing programs.

In keeping with the basic intention of the Framework Agreement, MAA President, Larry Desmeules emphasized the Association is seeking some basic commitments with all government sectors.

The first is that the MAA be kept informed at all stages of the government's development of policies and programs affecting Metis people. The second is that the MAA have meaningful consultation on the development and implementation of all policies and programs affecting Metis people. The third is that the MAA have significant participation in all government activities affecting Metis people (Second Metis National Conference, 1988).

One of our major objectives, claimed Desmeules, is to move Metis people from social dependency to economic self sufficiency. It is possible many of the Metis people now receiving social services can be trained and employed to deliver these services more effectively and efficiently, thus reducing both the cost of delivering services and the number of people receiving them. Participation of this nature can lead to peoples' enhancement of self-sufficiency.

President Desmeules also expressed the concern over existing policies and programs that have and are being imposed with little or no input

from the Metis community. Past and present experiences are evidence to the kind of consultation whereby government selects Metis people to serve on advisory committees. For whatever reason these individuals are selected, this type of selection process neither reflects adequate nor effective representation. These individuals may not be knowledgeable about Metis issues and needs of the Metis community, and their views may not be those of the Metis people generally. Unfortunately there was no mechanism in place that would make them accountable to the people they are supposed to represent.

Since the signing of the 1987 Framework Agreement between the Government of Alberta and Metis Association of Alberta, both parties are committed to recognition and affirmation of the guiding principles of Metis autonomy. The Framework Agreement is a political accord designed to ensure participation of the Metis people of Alberta in government decision making, such that government personnel not act on behalf of the Metis Association or the Metis people without the knowledge or prior consent of the Association.

Moreover, this accord ensures that the Metis Association will play a lead role (or share this role with government) in the design and delivery of programs, in addition to proposing policy and procedural changes, and to indicating the need for legislation with respect to matters that directly affect Metis people of Alberta. The Agreement confirms the provincial government's willingness to not only negotiate such policies, but to provide funding to enable effective negotiation.

As mentioned, the joint planning and action is a critical element for the effective efforts of both parties. Thus a strong aspiration of Metis autonomy, as encouraged by this Accord, is respectfully endorsed and supported by the political will of the Government of Alberta.

During these last two years of operation, the MAA has been able to identify both its strengths and weaknesses. This monitoring and evaluation has identified a number of needed changes. The MAA has identified the need to reorganize its role and mandate throughout the province. This reorganizational process will become a strong foundation which is an essential element in building for the future with Metis people of Alberta.

It is the intention of the Association to separate the political activities of the MAA from its administrative, technical and project activities. A major reorganization would recreate the Association under an Act of Legislature, and involve major revisions to bylaws, policies and procedures, organizational infrastructure and the way in which the subsidiaries of the organization and its other assets are held in trust for the Metis people of Alberta.

Awaiting this reorganization, the Association proposes an expansion and redesign of responsibilities within the existing structure, reflecting the increased level of funding requested as a part of the renewal of the Framework Agreement. Most recently, on December 1, 1989, President Desmeules, Metis Association of Alberta and Premier Getty, Government of Alberta, signed a renewal of the Framework Agreement for a further three years.

The design of the consultative process under the Agreement provides for a Joint Committee whose members are the MAA President and the Alberta Government Deputy Minister of the Executive Council. This Joint Committee meet as required to discuss planning and a course of action under the Agreement. Under the Joint Committee are Five Sector Sub-Committees. The role of each Sub-Committee is to bring forward "matters of concern to the Metis", and at the same time to initiate proposals for the improvement of services.

One of the most important sectors of this Agreement is with Family and Social Services. The Family and Social Services Sub-Committee is currently in the formative stages. Plans are underway for this sub-committee to submit terms-of-reference for its operations to the Joint Committee for approval. This shall include the preparation of a Memorandum of Understanding for the purpose of review and approval of the Joint Committee, for submission to the Minister of Alberta Family and Social Services.

WHAT IS METIS CHILDREN'S SERVICES?

In 1984, the Metis Association of Alberta conducted a series of regional workshops to identify issues and concerns in the lives of Metis people across the province. At the workshops, people came forward to talk about their experiences dealing with child welfare workers and the child welfare system. Concerns were raised about the approach Alberta Family and Social Services was taking in delivering child welfare services to the Metis community.

Metis children were being apprehended at an alarming rate, people testified, "without the next of kin or others in the community being offered the opportunity to serve as foster parents." (Alberta Metis Concerns: An Overview of Ten Metis Association of Alberta Workshops: Metis Association of Alberta, 1984, p.39)

In May 1984, Metis Local 1885 Edmonton of the Metis Association of Alberta responded to the issues and concerns raised in the workshops by establishing a child welfare committee to study the situation and to recommend ways of bringing about positive change. The committee determined that "it was in the best interests of Metis families that the Metis community assume responsibility in the area of child welfare" and "that the principles of community and political accountability were prime considerations" in determining a process for taking control.

The committee reviewed statistics, studies, reports and other relevant information. For several months, the committee held discussions and deliberations and took a closer look at the child welfare system. The committee met with the former Social Services Minister, Neil Webber. In November 1984, they completed a proposal which was submitted to the department of Social Services.

During this time, a young Metis under the care of Alberta Social Services took his life on June 26, 1984 at the home of the foster parents. The Richard Cardinal story revealed many weaknesses within the child welfare system. In addition it became a catalyst for both the Metis and Indian organizations. By this time, the Metis had already recognized child care as a priority and were already in the stages of preliminary development. It was during this time as well, that Alberta Family and Social Services completed a new Child Welfare Act. This new Act promotes the concepts of community involvement and least intrusive measures.

Metis Children's Services Society was established through a Special Resolution passed by the membership of Metis Local 1885 and was incorporated under the Societies Act of Alberta on April 25, 1985. Because of the concern of the disproportionate number of Metis children involved in the child welfare system, Metis specific program development posed as a challenge.

The agency currently provides support and intervention services through the family intervention, youth support and family service programs. Core funding is provided through a contractual agreement with Alberta

Family and Social Services (Edmonton Region), as well as from Family and Community Support Services, and other funding bodies for specific projects.

The Society is founded on the principles that the Metis community has the right to assume authority and responsibility for the design, development and delivery of services. Equally important is the involvement and participation of the Metis community as an essential element in this process.

The overall goals of Metis Children's Services are:

- To improve the quality and effectiveness of social services to Metis children and families.
- To improve the quality of services to Metis children and families.
- To co-operate with the Metis community, Metis leaders, and governments in the planning and coordination of social services to the Metis community, and to deliver its services more effectively and efficiently.

Metis Children's Services Society believes that it has a responsibility to provide and promote services that are community-oriented, community-based, and equally important, to receive a mandate from the Metis community. It is also of considerable importance that resources and authority be returned to Metis people in an effort to become equal participants in policy and decision making. Metis Children's Services aims to establish equity and balance in both the Metis community and the Social Services system. Metis Children's Services recognizes that it will not be capable of meeting these goals without the support of the Metis community, MAA, and the department of Social Services.

The agency recognises and appreciates the crucial role of the Metis Association of Alberta as a political structure in providing this mandate. Further, in order to complement the intent of the Framework Agreement, Metis Children's Services can play a lead role within the Family and Social Services Sector.

For this reason, on June 17, 1989 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed amongst Metis Children's Services, Metis Local 1885 and Metis Association of Alberta to expand from a local to a provincial mandate. Metis Children's Services Society is now under the auspices of the Metis Association of Alberta, the officially recognized political voice of the Metis people of Alberta.

What has happened since the M.O.U. Agreement?

This move provides Metis Children's Services Society with a provincial mandate that will integrate the Society into the restructuring process taking place within the Metis Association.

Metis Children's Services Society has submitted a proposed strategy believed to enhance and compliment the intent of the Framework Agreement. The strategy evolved as a result of the M.O.U. out of a need to address child and family issues across the entire Province.

This strategy will enable the Association through Metis Child and Family Services to do this. Of significant importance, is that the strategy was created in the spirit of forming a strong partnership between the Metis people of Alberta.

This document proposes a Provincial MODEL for the delivery of services yet to be affirmed by the Association and its regions. It outlines a strategy and a process for the expansion of services throughout the Province. The process involves eliciting feedback and generating discussion on Metis Children's Services Society's present thinking and future direction, i.e. structure, values, roles and responsibilities, goals, objectives and program components.

Coordination is an essential element of the proposed model of the future community based and community administered child care services. It is only proposed to begin discussion on the mechanisms to foster the involvement of the Metis community at the regional and provincial level. The pioneering efforts in the development of Metis Children's Services is relevant to the task of addressing the social needs of the Metis community with community-based and community controlled services, based on priorities and resources and recognition of their own local needs.

Some of the issues, experiences, and operating principles of M.C.S.S. can lend credibility to the provincial vision of the Metis community. The quest is to assume responsibility and authority in the design, development and delivery of social programs. Experience tells us that the involved parties must be able to balance provincial vision with local needs and priorities. This balance involves neither getting side-tracked with details and losing track of the vision, nor getting blinded by a provincial vision and losing sight of the problems that are local realities.

Phase one allows for a consultation process with the Metis community on a proposed structure to deliver services to Metis children and families. If you are to deliver services you need to have a vehicle that is suitable to the Metis community. A vehicle that will allow for ongoing regional and community control, community participation and community leadership. A vehicle that will provide for the adequate delivery of services, and one that can relate to the department both at regional and provincial levels.

Phase two is directed at:

* implementing the endorsed structure
* developing an effective provincial administrative control plan over all financial operations
* developing an effective provincial administrative control over program management, project management and service delivery management and
* developing programs and services based on identified needs and priorities within each Region.

This phase calls for one person to be hired within each Zone to identify issues and concerns, existing resources; to liaise with Regional Managers and Metis communities; and to develop service delivery strategies.

The strategy is a working document designed to accommodate commitment and motivation from the Metis community and the Metis Association. This model is subject to change and revision necessary as a result of feedback from the proposed process and as the model evolves.

UPDATE: At this time, the Family and Social Services Sub-Committee are discussing and deliberating this Strategy.

Part II

Report of
Metis Participation at
The Lieutenant-Governor's Conference
Celebrating Alberta's Families

I. REPORT OF METIS PARTICIPATION AT THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE - CELEBRATING ALBERTA'S FAMILIES

INTRODUCTION

In October 1989, Metis Children's Services (MCS) and the Metis Association of Alberta (MAA) received an invitation to participate in an information meeting of non-government organizations to provide input into the Lieutenant-Governor's Conference on the Family (to be held February 19 - 21, 1990). This information meeting was attended by Fred Anderson, MAA Social Services Sector Advisor, Carolyn Pettifer, MCS Executive Director, and Joey Hamelin, MCS Project Manager.

On November 29, 1989, Ms. Sally Huemmert, Conference Director made a presentation to the Social Services Sub-Committee at the request of Fred and Carolyn. It was recommended to Sally that Metis representation to the Conference be coordinated through the Metis Association.

The Board of the Metis Association felt that this Conference could provide an important forum to examine significant issues affecting families in Alberta. They saw this as an opportunity for the delegates to make a very relevant contribution to issues of concern to Metis families in Alberta and to assist in approaches to strengthen and support these families. Their concerns for disproportionate numbers of family breakdowns, poverty and instability, youth suicide, crime and drug dependency and high child welfare caseloads of Metis families were expressed.

It was noted that the purpose of the Conference was to identify significant challenges that face Alberta's families and to develop an agenda and strategies for action which will strengthen and support families. The Board felt that direct involvement and participation in this process could be of benefit to Metis families.

The Board of Directors at their meetings on November 30, and December 1, 1989, made a decision to request that at least five individuals from each Zone be given an opportunity to participate at the Conference. Mr. Anderson and Ms. Pettifer were given the direction to prepare a study paper in preparation for the Conference and to do the follow-up required to bring in the Metis delegates to the Conference.

It was noted that a Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families was in the process of being established that would put into action the agendas and strategies proposed at the Conference. The Board felt that having direct input into this Council would ensure that particular attention be directed to Metis families. They passed a motion to nominate Carolyn Pettifer to the Council for consideration. This Motion reads:

> MOTION #13: MCS: AUGUST COLLINS/FREDA MARTELL: Dec 1/89
>
> MOVED to submit Ms. Pettifer's name to sit as a representative of the MAA on the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families. MOTION CARRIED

We are pleased to report that the MAA's lobbying efforts have been successful and that Ms. Pettifer has been appointed to the Premier's Council.

The Metis Association were also successful in lobbying for 14 MAA delegates to attend the Conference. There were in fact 19 Metis delegates who attended, with others being represented through the Canadian Native Friendship Centre and Native Counselling Services.

The following report pulls together the issues, concerns and recommendations of the delegates who attended the Conference and the workshop.

II. DELEGATES FEEDBACK ON THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE - CELEBRATING ALBERTA'S FAMILIES

The Lieutenant-Governor's Conference - Celebrating Alberta's Families was held on February 19-21, 1990. The Metis Association of Alberta and Metis Children's Services Society provided some input into the Conference.

Carolyn Pettifer, Executive Director of Metis Children's Services Society and Fred Anderson, Metis Association of Alberta, Family and Social Services Sector Advisor, received an invitation in late October 1989 to participate in an information meeting of non-government organizations to provide input into the Lieutenant-Governor's Conference.

The Metis Association of Alberta Board of Directors made a request that at least five participants from each zone be given an opportunity to attend and participate at the Conference. As well, Fred Anderson and Carolyn Pettifer were given direction to prepare a study paper and research project in preparation for the conference.

Carolyn Pettifer and Fred Anderson met and talked with Sally Huemmert, Conference Coordinator, about having more delegates and the study paper and research project.

In early January 1990 a letter was sent to each of the zones and followed up by a telephone call seeking a priority listing of Metis delegates who would be attending the Conference.

On January 24 and 25, 1990 questionnaires were distributed to each zone. More questionnaires were sent out in late January 1990 in hopes of getting more input, feedback and recommendations from the Metis community. The numerous other questionnaires were completed by other Metis people, Metis Children's Services Society and the Metis Association of Alberta.

Upon negotiating for more Metis delegates, it was decided that two delegates from the priority listing for each zone would be able to attend the Conference. On February 19, 1990 Metis delegates met at Metis Children's Services and discussed the up-coming Conference on the Family. The delegates also reviewed and discussed the purpose of the February 22, 1990 Metis workshop.

In order to do a study paper, many discussions were held between Sally Huemmert, Fred Anderson and Carolyn Pettifer.

A MAA/MCS Steering Committee was established which completed the study paper on Metis families and the research project, included in this document.

The Lieutenant-Governor's Conference was well organized. The Metis delegates indicated that the reception was good and it was an honour to meet the Lieutenant-Governor, the Honourable Helen Hunley.

The Conference also provided an excellent opportunity to learn more about family trends in Alberta and provided nine study papers and time to network with other conference delegates.

Further to the above, the Lieutenant-Governor's Conference provided a number of practical recommendations to the Premier's Council in Support Of Alberta Families.

The delegates felt that this was needed as Metis issues are not often heard in forums of this type. Many delegates did express how it had been difficult for them to get Metis issues discussed at the Conference.

Delegates felt that they had some opportunity to educate other participants at the Conference, and to make some contacts. They felt that they had some impact in starting to make people aware that there were issues for Metis people. They were also able to network within the Metis community with Zone delegates and others.

The structure of the Conference was at times difficult to work with. Some delegates felt the sessions could have been longer to allow for more discussion time, or more indepth exploration of issues.

Delegates felt that the February 22, 1990 Metis workshop was a very important part of the Conference, as delegates from all over the province were able to get together to begin as professionals in the Metis community to develop an awareness of Metis issues and Metis solutions.

The Steering Committee was encouraged that nineteen (19) Metis delegates were allowed to attend the Conference, and that they had the opportunity to get together and talk about issues. Their presence was felt and their issues will be addressed through recommendations to the Premier's Council.

Nineteen Metis delegates attended the Conference. These were:

ZONE 1	Betsy Atkinson, Fort McMurray Evelyn Webb, Fort McMurray
ZONE 2	Clayton Trottier, Bonneyville Theresa Jenkens, Elk Point
ZONE 3	Freda Martell, Calgary Madeleine Mottas, Medicine Hat
ZONE 4	Carol Chalifoux, Grande Cache Joey Hamelin, Edmonton
ZONE 5	Peter Campion, Slave Lake Jeff Chalifoux, Slave Lake
ZONE 6	Diane Ireland, Peace River Marlene Lanz, Peace River
MAA	Fred Anderson Stan Plante
MCS	Carolyn Pettifer Lucille McLeod
Others	Ann Desmeules, Native Counselling Biddy Giroux, Native Friendship Centre Georgina Donald, Native Friendship Centre

III. JOINT WORKSHOP - METIS ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA, METIS CHILDREN'S SERVICES - ISSUES AFFECTING METIS FAMILIES

A workshop sponsored by the Metis Association of Alberta and Metis Children's Services took place on the day following the Lieutenant-Governor's Conference. This workshop was held at the Edmonton Inn on February 22, 1990 with over 40 participants in attendance from the Metis community.

This workshop was organized in anticipation of concerns that the Conference would not provide the Metis participants with an adequate forum to bring light to government and the general public the numerous issues that continue to affect Metis children and families. This was due primarily to the fact that the Lieutenant-Governor's Conference was based on the premise that there are currently programs in place to deal with inter-personal issues in families, eg. family violence, child abuse, substance abuse, income support. However the delegates to the workshop felt that these programs are not meeting the needs of the Metis community. The MAA/MCS workshop was intended to focus discussions on these issues and concerns specific to Metis families and to make recommendations to the 'Premiers Council in Support of Alberta Families', to assist them in their responsibility in developing approaches to strengthen and support families.

The workshop was opened by Mr. Larry Desmeules, President of the Metis Association of Alberta. Issues discussed at the workshop tended to focus primarily on; the need for Metis community recognition; the inadequacy of existing programs/ services to meet the needs of the Metis children and families; the need for Metis community participation in the policy development process and in the delivery of services to the Metis community; and the need to focus initiatives on prevention and early intervention.

ISSUES AND CONCERNS

1. METIS COMMUNITY RECOGNITION

Participants expressed concern over the lack of recognition given to the Metis community. As one participant noted, "the Metis voice wants to be heard. We have had one Conference and two workshops and we have been making the same recommendations for five years. We are not taken seriously."

In 1984, the MAA held workshops to identify issues of concern of the Metis community in various areas. Some of the recommendations that were made then are very similar to the ones that are made here now.

Some expressed concern with being lumped in with multi-culturalism. This has had an adverse effect on Metis families. Some participants felt that the promotion of multi-culturalism has been at the expense of the Metis culture. Lack of cultural identity is a real issue within the Metis community. One participant noted "the Metis community know more about other cultures than their own". Issues of lack of cultural recognition, negative stereotyping, lack of positive role models, lead to denial of one's culture which in turn leads to poor self image and low self-esteem.

Metis have very similar problems to Indian people but they are often categorized and lost under the term 'Native'. One participant shared his insights, "We are a unique and distinct nation of people who are neither European nor Indian". The Constitution of Canada recognizes Metis as an aboriginal people with distinct status.

One participant expressed her views that "Metis people are their own most valuable resource. They have different ways of looking at children. We don't think about it as parenting, but we do it. Social workers with all their training do not recognize these differences. We have our own child rearing practices not understood by others".

Participants felt that more emphasis should be placed on promoting the Metis culture, their heritage, their history and their positive contributions and their crucial role in bringing Canada into Confederation. Participants felt that there has been too much emphasis on the negative way that the Metis are portrayed in the Press. Some expressed concern that the non-Metis community have very little understanding or knowledge of who are the Metis.

2. THE INADEQUACY OF EXISTING PROGRAMS/SERVICES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF METIS CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.

Discussions around the inadequacy of existing programs and services to meet the needs of Metis children and families assumed a high profile at the workshop. The workshop brought out the fact that current programs are not meeting the needs of the Metis. These include the child welfare system, family violence programs, day care programs, substance abuse, income support, education system, and

prevention programs. It was largely felt that this was because they are developed and delivered by non-Metis who do not have an understanding of the issues faced by the Metis. Some felt that though they attempt to provide culturally appropriate programming, they have not been successful.

One participant cited day care as an example. Metis people are not using day cares or after-school care programs even though there are subsidies available. Very few Metis families use the subsidy programs. Lack of trust with institutions and lack of positive role models were seen as some of the reasons for this.

Delegates from Grande Cache, who presented their issues in a written statement, were concerned that the services in their community "turn a deaf ear and make like they are doing their best". They expressed concern that their families are dysfunctional and incidents are kept under the table, such as suicides, alcohol and drug overdose, family violence, incest, rape, battering, and numerous others.

It was continually noted that Metis families continue to face disproportionate rates amongst family violence, child welfare, Young Offenders, institutions, suicides, family dysfunctions and welfare rolls.

Much discussion revolved around Metis youth. "Many of our kids don't know what a family is because of separation from family and community. Family problems at home affect kids at school. There is an extremely high school drop-out rate amongst our youth". Inner city youth of Edmonton was discussed as a real issue.

Concern was expressed by participants with the non-utilization of health services or the lack of appropriate health services for Metis children and families. Yet statistics indicate that the poor physical and mental health conditions amongst the Metis are at an alarming high rate. This is supported by the City of Edmonton Board of Health who initiated an urban native health committee to address this concern over two years ago. This committee has identified a dire need to have urban Metis and Indian health workers. To date they have been unsuccessful in securing the necessary resources.

Some participants felt that the Social Services Appeal process is not working for the Metis. They do not use the process. There needs to be an advocacy process for families with both the child welfare system and income security.

3. METIS PARTICIPATION IN THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS AND IN THE DELIVERY OF SERVICES.

The need for Metis participation in policy development and in the delivery of services was continually identified as an issue. Participants expressed concern with the issue of accountability to the Metis community. Some were concerned that Alberta Family and Social Services has initiated a Native Services Unit and has also appointed a Provincial Native Advisory Committee and a Regional Advisory Committee. It was felt that there should be Metis participation and involvement in initiatives and directions affecting the Metis community.

It was noted that "native experts in government are appointed without involvement or consultation with the Metis community". It was felt that the Metis should have a say and that appointments should be made through the Metis government process so that they can be held accountable to the Metis community. It was felt that people sitting on advisory boards, committees, etc. representing the Metis community should have a mechanism for accountability.

4. FOCUS INITIATIVES ON PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

Concern was noted by participants that the majority of resources are usually allocated to intervention and post-vention services. Participants felt that more focus should be directed to prevention and early intervention. One participant noted that we don't require additional resources but rather a re-allocation of existing resources could better serve the long-term needs of families.

Programs and services directed towards building self-esteem and confidence, self-identity, motivation, and empowering individuals would greatly enhance the ability of families to function. Programs and services directed to health and well-being would greatly assist in stabilizing and strengthening Metis family units.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **THAT A SEPARATE CONFERENCE BE ORGANIZED BY THE MAA AND MCS TO ADDRESS ISSUES AND CONCERNS TO METIS CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AND TO DEVELOP STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS TO BEGIN TO ADDRESS THESE CONCERNS.**

   This recommendation, in the area of Social Services, was also made in 1984, when the MAA conducted workshops throughout the Province to identify issues and concerns to Metis people. The results of these discussion and its recommendations were published in ***ALBERTA METIS CONCERNS: AN OVERVIEW OF TEN METIS ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA WORKSHOPS 1984***.

2. **THAT THE METIS COMMUNITY BE GIVEN THE RESPONSIBILITY TO ADDRESS ISSUES OF CONCERN TO THEIR FAMILIES AND DEVELOP THEIR OWN APPROACHES TO STRENGTHEN AND SUPPORT THOSE FAMILIES.**

   It was stated over and over at the Conference that existing programs are not meeting the needs of Metis families. The Metis community is showing a strong readiness and intent to assume responsibility for their own children and families. Metis Children's Services is a good representation of this intent. Metis Children's Services has demonstrated both to government and to the Metis community that it can develop and deliver programs and services that are more appropriate to the needs of the Metis community.

   Presently the agency has a provincial strategy in place endorsed by the Metis Association to begin a process whereby the Metis community can become directly involved in the delivery of these services. This strategy is presently awaiting government response. Metis Children's Services has a Memorandum of Understanding in place with the Metis Association that outlines a process for involvement with Metis children and families.

3. **THAT A REPRESENTATIVE BE RECOMMENDED BY THE METIS ASSOCIATION FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE PREMIER'S COUNCIL IN SUPPORT OF ALBERTA FAMILIES.**

This recommendation, at the writing of this report, has been accepted and a representative endorsed by the Metis Association has been appointed to the Council.

4. **THAT THE PREMIER'S COUNCIL IN SUPPORT OF ALBERTA FAMILIES WORK IN CONSULTATION WITH THE METIS ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA SOCIAL SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE IN IDENTIFYING ISSUES OF CONCERN AND IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIES AFFECTING THE METIS COMMUNITY.**

Participants at the workshop looked to the Framework Agreement process developed between the Premier of the Province and the Metis Association to promote and enhance services to Metis children and families. The Social Services Sub-Committee is one sector of this agreement that addresses issues of concern to Metis families.

5. **THAT TWO MORE SUB-COMMITTEES BE ESTABLISHED TO ENHANCE SERVICES TO METIS CHILDREN AND FAMILIES THROUGH THE FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT TO RELATE WITH CORRESPONDING GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS. THESE ARE CULTURE AND HEALTH.**

This recommendation is made because of the concerns expressed by the participants that issues around cultural identity, self-esteem and recognition play a crucial role in building stronger and stable families. Physical and mental health issues are of prime concern to Metis children and families. To effectively address the well-being of families, focus must include these areas.

6. **THAT METIS REPRESENTATIVES BE APPOINTED TO APPEAL PANELS (CHILD WELFARE AND INCOME SECURITY). FURTHER THAT ANY APPOINTMENTS TO NATIVE ADVISORY BOARDS AND VARIOUS INTER-GOVERNMENT COMMITTEES REPRESENTING THE INTEREST OF THE METIS COMMUNITY BE MADE IN CONSULTATION WITH THE METIS COMMUNITY THROUGH THE METIS ASSOCIATION.**

This recommendation resulted from the concerns that various government advisory boards and committees have in the past appointed native consultants to represent and advise on behalf of the Metis community who do not necessarily represent or are not accountable to the Metis community. Further the recommendations made on behalf of the Metis community do not necessarily reflect their issues and concerns. This is an ever growing concern.

7. **THAT THE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS PROVIDING SERVICES TO THE METIS COMMUNITY DEVELOP JOINTLY, AND IN COLLABORATION WITH THE METIS COMMUNITY, POLICIES THAT ARE SPECIFIC TO THE METIS.**

This is a result of concerns that government departments make an effort to develop native specific policies but do not involve the Metis community directly. An example is the development of the Native child welfare policies recently developed by Social Services. Policies involving transfer of authority, repatriation, long term planning, alternate and substitute care for Metis children are all vital concerns of the Metis community. Every effort should be made to include the participation of the Metis in the development of these policies.

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS:

DESMEULES, Larry, PRESIDENT Metis Association (MAA)
CAMPION, Peter, Chairperson, Social Services Sub-Committee (MAA)
CHALIFOUX, Thelma, Board of Director, MAA Zone 4
MARTEL, Freda, Board of Director, MAA Zone 3
ATKINSON, Betsy, MAA Fort McMurray Local President Zone 1
WEBB, Evelyn, MAA Fort McMurray, Zone 1
TROTTIER, Clayton, Bonnyville MAA Zone 2
JENKENS, Theresa, Elk Point, MAA Zone 2
MOTTUS, Madeleine, Medicine Hat, MAA Zone 3
LAURITSEN, Orpha, Medicine Hat, MAA Zone 3
CHALIFOUX, Carol, Grande Cache, MAA Zone 4
DONALD, Lyle, Edmonton Metis Local 2085 MAA Zone 4
ROY, Thomas J., Edmonton Metis Local President MAA Zone 4
CHALIFOUX, Jeff, MAA Zone Facilitator Zone 5
LANZ, Marlene, MAA Zone Facilitator, Zone 6
IRELAND, Diane, MAA Zone Coordinator, Zone 6
ANDERSON, Fred, MAA Social Services Sector Advisor
PLANTE, Stan, MAA Framework Coordinator
HAYES, Sheila, MAA Education Conference Coordinator
RICHARDSON, Doreen, PRESIDENT, Metis Children's Services (MCS)
DANIELS, Judy, Board of Director, MCS
PETTIFER, Carolyn, Executive Director, MCS
DIMOTOFF, Lyn, Program Consultant MCS
MCLEOD, Lucille, Personal Management, MCS
FAYANT, Brian, Case Management Supervisor, MCS
CARDINAL, Flora, Family Intervention, MCS
YOUNG, LaVerne, Family Intervention, MCS
PLANTE, Ivan, Youth Support MCS
HAMELIN, Joey, Project Manager MCS
THIELE, Gwenn, Administrator, MCS
SANGRET, Lena, Office Clerk, MCS
CHACON, Ana Marie, Special Project MCS
BOUVIER, Jacquie, Special Project MCS
L'HIRONDELLE, Gwenn, Volunteer, MCS
WHITE, Jim, Edmonton City Police
DESMEULES, Ann, Native Counselling
DONALD, Georgina, Canadian Native Friendship Centre (CNFC)
GIROUX, Biddy, Referral, CNFC
GLADUE, Mike, Alberta Family and Social Services
HUEMMERT, Sally, Alberta Family and Social Services
BATEY, Jeanna, Alberta Family and Social Services

Part III

Significant Issues Affecting Metis Families

Metis Association of Alberta

Metis Children's Services Society

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES AFFECTING METIS FAMILIES TODAY

BACKGROUND TO RESEARCH PAPER

The Metis Association vested responsibility in Fred Anderson and Carolyn Pettifer to develop a study paper and a research project to be used to stimulate discussion of participants at a Metis workshop to run concurrent to the Lieutenant-Governor's Conference.

Mr. Anderson and Ms. Pettifer worked along with a Steering Committee to provide direction and guidance to these projects and the papers that evolved as a result. This Committee consisted of:

Fred Anderson, Sector Advisor, Metis Association of Alberta
Carolyn Pettifer, Executive Director, Metis Children's Services
Lyn Dimotoff, Program Consultant, Metis Children's Services on secondment from Alberta Family and Social Services
Jennifer Hyndman, Social Planner, Edmonton Social Planning Council

The Researcher/Writer for these projects was Joey Hamelin, Project Coordinator, Metis Children's Services.

The Steering Committee met once a week during the months of December, January and February. Other Metis persons (notably Sheila Hayes and Lucille McCleod) acted as consultants in discussions on the questionnaire format.

Two papers grew out of this initiative to present a Metis perspective on social issues affecting Metis families. The first project involved an extensive literature search and discussions related to the social and political conditions which have affected Metis families through history, and how these relate to Metis families in general today. Joey Hamelin and Jennifer Hyndman collaborated to conduct this project and compile the information collected into the study paper entitled *"The Impact of a Changing Society on The Metis Family"* (presented as Part I of this report).

The literature search incorporated information from many Metis written books and publications, the Attorney General Library, and other federal and provincial government sources. Many Metis community members were consulted for their views on the historical and present day political and social conditions affecting Metis families. It should be emphasized that the points of view expressed in the paper are intended to present a Metis perspective.

The study paper deals with global and historical issues affecting Metis families in general. A focus is placed on Metis political aspirations and initiatives in the way of self-responsibility and self-government (i.e. the Framework Agreement).

The second paper *"Significant Issues Affecting Metis Families Today"* (Part III of this report) is based entirely on research information collected from a questionnaire format used to interview over 60 Metis families.

This questionnaire dealt with issues of language, culture, identity, mobility, family and household composition, economic factors such as income and housing, education, leisure activities, production and consumption of goods, care of children and household duties, religion, involvement with child welfare and legal systems, abuse, death, emotional and physical health.

The survey covered a very wide range of issues affecting Metis families, and of necessity was aimed at presenting a broad and balanced picture rather than an indepth study of any one particular area. Many revisions of the questionnaire where done despite the short timeline which the Steering Committee was faced with. The end result was a 162 question format. A "Comments" section was added to give respondents an opportunity to provide an evaluation of the method used to collect the data.

Interviews were conducted with 60 families, taking 1 to 3 hours each to complete. The scope of information provided by these interviews was enormous. No other specifically Metis research had existed in the province before this preliminary profile of Metis families was compiled. Metis families (and their issues) have been subsumed into the category of "Indian" and/or "native" in social research and statistics, with little or no regard for distinct needs and differences between these groups of people.

The information presented in the research paper was summarized by Lyn Dimotoff to present the most significant data. Further analysis and cross correlation of data would yield many more pages of potentially significant information concerning today's Metis families. The questionnaire format could be used in a province wide long-term study, and further detailed research in specific areas (i.e needs assessment of Metis youths) would provide more indepth information.

Many thanks go to the staff at Metis Children's Services and the Metis Association of Alberta for donating their time and effort to conduct the interviews. Thank you to Sarah Jain, who conducted the interviews with MCS staff. Thanks also goes to the clerical staff for their typing of the many drafts of the questionnaire and report, and for data entry of the questionnaire responses.

Some questionnaires were conducted with families outside of Edmonton. Special thanks goes to Marlene Lanz and Diane Ireland from Zone 6 for volunteering to conduct some of the interviews. Acknowledgements also go to the staff at Alberta Mental Health, i.e. Gus Thompson and Peter Campbell for their assistance in computing the questionnaire. Peter Campbell was also involved in conducting an orientation session for the interviewers.

The Steering Committee would like to give a special thank you to the 60 respondents to the questionnaire who shared their very personal story with us, and who were willing to accommodate us on such short notice.

This research project was fruitful in terms of the number of people involved in the project, the wealth of information gleaned from the interviews conducted, and the proliferation of information on Metis issues. This information will prove useful to the Metis community, Metis political structures and agencies, and other organizations (such as the Edmonton Social Planning Council) which are influential in social planning but which have little information on the Metis community.

Significant Issues Affecting Metis Families

The primary intent of both the study paper and the research project was to stimulate discussions and to provide background information and Metis specific data. It is hoped, by all those involved in these projects, that this information will be utilized in development of Metis specific policies and programs to ensure an equity in social, political and economic conditions for Metis families now and in the future.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research project was to capture the personal real experience of Metis families living in Alberta. This project is a pioneer study which aims to explore the structure, the relationships and the trends of Metis families in Alberta.

Existing statistics which pertain to Metis are presently lumped under the term "native". From a Metis perspective "native" does not accurately address the issues affecting Metis families nor does this label recognize the efforts of the Metis Association's aspirations of attaining self-determination and self-sufficiency. Our investigations found the term "native" is often limited to status Indians, the only group for which statistics are available.

The project takes into consideration information on the stability and changes in Metis families today. The approach taken is presented within a historical, constitutional, social, economic and political framework. It is intended to be informative, to provoke interest and curiosity, to highlight strengths and issues and to stimulate further investigations.

We are under no illusions as to the limitations inherent in the nature of the project. The pool of information provided by the questionnaire emphasizes quality and breadth rather than quantity and precision. More questions are raised than can be presently answered, but this will enable us to communicate across the province as we clarify our vision of effecting change in the best interests of Metis families.

METHODOLOGY

This project adopted a qualitative methodology. Our main research tool was an in-depth interview drafted by a steering committee approved by the Metis Association of Alberta. The information from this interview format comprises the substance this paper, in terms of trends in Metis families.

A training session was held for all interviewers to ensure consistency and to reinforce the importance of confidentiality. Consent forms and the numbering system for the interview were explained, and all questions were reviewed for clarification. Initial contacts with potential respondents was made by telephone. All interviews consented to were conducted in person on a one-to-one basis.

The project was an ambitious one. 162 questions were asked of each respondent with a total of 60 interviews conducted. Individual interviews lasted from one to three hours and were conducted over a two week period of time.

The committee initially anticipated conducting 100 interviews province wide. A number of constraints, especially time, have limited this goal. In the absence of research specific to Metis, the Steering Committee has consolidated resources and analyzed feedback in order to complete this important project.

A. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Out of the 60 respondents, 42 were female (70%) and 18 were male (30%).

Age of respondents ranged from 18 to 79 years old. The average age was 39 and the median age was 36 years.

91.7% of the respondents (55) live in Edmonton. 79.7% of respondents were born in Alberta, 16.9% in Saskatchewan, and 1.7% each in Manitoba and the Northwest Territories.

Marital Status	Number	Percentage
single	13	21.7
married	19	31.7
widowed	5	8.3
separated	3	5.0
divorced	12	20.0
common-law	8	13.3

B. CULTURAL

Language:

33.3% of the persons surveyed speak Cree as well as English. 11.7% also speak French, and 18.3% speak various Metis dialects. This compares to 63.3% of their mothers and 46.7% of their fathers who speak/spoke Cree, 16.7% and 28.3% who speak/spoke French, and 25% and 15.1% who speak/spoke various Metis dialects.

The respondents who spoke Cree were somewhat older than the general sample. The average age for Cree speakers was 44.9 years, and the median was 40.5 years. Although 1/6 of our sample were 27 years old and younger, only one 27 year old spoke Cree and none of those younger did.

These statistics may indicate that although 1/3 of the respondents speak Cree, the use of Cree and Metis dialects may not be as prevalent in the younger generation.

Identity:

In response to the question "What does Metis mean to you?", many answered that Metis means "you are half and half of something - half Cree/half French, Scotch".

Others described what the Metis culture is and/or how they felt about being Metis, for example:

"Just being Metis my whole life. I take the best out of three worlds."

"Metis is a race of people with their own distinct culture."

"Tradition, family, pride, work, imagination."

"Being true Canadian" "Proud Canadian" "Unique"

All of the respondents identified with being Metis, and 58/60 felt proud to be Metis. Lack of pride in being Metis related to feeling unsure of who they were.

50% of respondents had experienced some confusion about who they were, primarily as a child. For some they felt a need to be white (raised in white families) or they felt ashamed of the Indian part of themselves

due to discrimination. Some felt a lack of knowledge about the Metis, i.e. "as a youth, called half-breeds - nobody knew what a Metis was".

96.7% of respondents felt that it was important that Metis people maintain their cultural identity.

Cultural Events/Activities:

Of those who believed cultural identity was important, 87.7% attend Metis cultural activities, and 62.5% actively participate in these events.

90% of respondents practiced traditions distinct to the Metis culture, such as jigging, speaking the language, arts and crafts.

History:

70% felt that they had a good knowledge of Metis culture, primarily because of the teaching/example of their parents and grandparents. 75% felt they were familiar with Metis history, and many were researching Metis history.

The majority of respondents noted "Louis Riel's fighting for the land and the rights of the Metis people" as the most significant event in Metis history. Others noted "passing of the Metis Betterment Act - 1929" and "establishing Metis Settlements" as significant.

Others believed the "formation of the Metis Association and the Metis National Council at the Constitutional Talks" was significant. Another stated that the "Battle of Seven Oaks in 1817 was important because it was the first time Metis said we are a new Nation - beginning of the struggle". One respondent answered "the birth of my father and mother."

Discrimination:

67.8% of respondents believed they had been discriminated against at some time in their life because they were Metis. Of these, 25% felt that they had been discriminated against in housing.

When asked how they had dealt with discrimination, their responses ranged from passive ("sad, rejection left a mark" and "powerless - backed away") to aggressive ("physical and verbal battles" and "anger, retaliation, reverse prejudice") to assertive ("called Alberta Human Rights" and "got into jobs that influenced my social situations".)

When asked how people would deal with prejudice today, they most often indicated a healthy assertive response ("today I know who I am and have accepted me for me and feel great about it", "I'd stand up for my rights nicely and politely", and "stand up for my rights, stand proud and make people aware discrimination is against the law".) Some people said experiencing discrimination had helped them to grow. "Today my identity is solid and positive."

Role Models:

63.3% of respondents had/have Metis role models. These were evenly split being family members as role models, and historical/contemporary Metis leaders. Family members (such as parents, grandparents) were chosen as role models because they were proud, worked hard, had good self-esteem, and taught the respondent about Metis history and culture.

Historical/contemporary Metis leaders were chosen for their accomplishments, pride in being Metis, and their actions in standing up for the rights of others. These included Louis Riel, Gabriel Dumont,

Joe Dion, Jim Brady, Malcome Norris, Adrian Hope, Dr. Anne Anderson, Rita Houle, Stan Daniels, Pearl Calahasen, Clarence Trotchie and Butch Plante.

48.3% of respondents felt they were taught something in school about the role of the Metis in Canadian history. 72.4% of these felt what was taught had affected their identity, as it was "derogatory" to Metis people, "created a fear of Natives" and portrayed them as "being separate and bad and in opposition to western (white) thinking".

One individual felt all non-white groups were badly portrayed in school, "all natives were savages, thieves, violent individuals, i.e. Hiawatha books, Black Sambo, the Chinese twins, etc". One felt "proud that the Metis fought back".

Mobility:

Respondents to our questionnaire presented as stable in terms of residency. 47.4% had lived in their present community for 10 years or more, plus another 8.8% had lived in their present community all of their lives.

The average number of communities that respondents had lived in was 5. The majority of persons who had lived in several communities had moved frequently as children (their fathers were seeking employment or they were moved to several foster homes), but as adults their residence had been very stable, with the only moves being for employment or education.

81.7% of respondents had been raised in a rural community or small town, and had moved to the city for education and/or employment reasons.

Bill C31:

10 of the 60 respondents believed that they were eligible for treaty status. Of these, 3 had applied for status under Bill C31. All 3 of these still considered themselves to be Metis.

C. ECONOMICS

Living Arrangements:

71.7% of respondents live in a house, with 14% owning their own home and 52.6% renting. 24.6% rent an apartment, 5.3% live in a room and board situation, and 3.5% listed their accommodations as "other". The average rent was $400 to $500, and the average mortgage was $500 to $600 per month.

The average household contained 3 individuals. Households were not overcrowded, as the average number of household bedrooms was 2.7.

80% of respondents were satisfied with their accommodations. 35% had experienced problems in finding adequate accommodations in the past, with reasons sighted as being "rent too high", "discrimination" and "too many children".

18.3% of respondents stated that at some point in their life they had been homeless. Most stated that this had been for a short period of time (under 4 months) and that they had stayed with friends, relatives, or "on the street".

Livelihood:

Employment Status	Number	Percentage
employed full time	28	46.7
employed part time	3	5.0
unemployed	5	8.3
homemaker	8	13.3
student	12	20.0
retired	4	6.7
disabled	2	3.3
other	7	11.7

Note: 9 respondents listed more than one type of employment status (i.e. employed part time and student or employed full time and homemaker), therefore responses do not total 60 and percentages do not total 100.

Income Source	Number	Percentage
employment - professional	11	18.3
employment - administrative	12	20.0
employment - management	5	8.3
employment - trade	3	5.0
employment - service	3	5.0
employment - labour	4	6.7
employment - other	4	6.7
student loan/grant	6	10.0
alimony	1	1.7
social allowance	14	23.3
pension	4	6.7
disability pension	2	3.3
other	5	8.3

Note: 14 respondents listed more than one source of income (i.e. more than one type of employment income or employment income and student loan), therefore responses do not total 60 and percentages do not total 100.

Average annual respondent income was $26,999. Minimum individual annual income was $6,600. and maximum individual income was $44,000.

Average annual combined family income was $29,384. This indicates an adequate income considering the average family size was 3. (State Canada lists the poverty line for a family of 4 living in Edmonton as approximately $26,000. per year). Minimum annual combined family income was $8,796. and the maximum was +$65,000.

48.7% of respondents felt that their income was not adequate to support their family. 80% of respondents with incomes less than $20,000. felt their income was inadequate and 42.9% of respondents whose income was $20,000 -$30,000. felt it was inadequate. 100% of those whose income was $30,000 - $40,000 felt it was inadequate, and 16.7% of those whose income was $40,000 - $50,000 felt it was inadequate.

45% of respondents had family incomes of $20,000 or less. Of these, 72.2% were single parents on Social Assistance, 16.7% were single wage earner families, 5.6% were pensioners, and 5.6% were couples on Social Assistance.

On the other end of the spectrum, 15% of families had combined income in excess of $50,000. 83.3% of these families had dual incomes, most often with both spouses in administrative/managerial employment. 56.9% of all respondents indicated they lived in a dual income family.

Of those who had no employment income (22), 59.1% were receiving Social Allowance benefits. Most had been receiving benefits for 3 years or more.

These families were considerably disadvantages compared to the average. 2 families had incomes of less than $10,000 per year, while the other 11 had incomes of less than $15,000. Total household size was larger than in the general sample (3.8 individuals compared to 3).

Average yearly income for respondents on social assistance was $10,845. This figure is considerably below the poverty line, so it is not surprising that 84.6% felt that their income was not adequate to meet their basic needs. As one respondent put it "after the bills are paid, there's nothing left for myself or fun for the family". The fact that 15.4% of those on Social Assistance felt their income was adequate attests to their superior budgeting skills.

45.3% of respondents stated that they were economically poor right now, and 83.3% felt that they had been poor in the past. Considering the economic situation of a number of the respondents, they were generally optimistic. 83.3% felt that their financial situation would get better. The reasons they stated for this were "will have finished my education", "will have a better job".

Education/Training:

There was an error in how the questionnaire was worded in this section. We therefore can not differential between those who actually graduated from high school, and those who completed only some high school. Despite the inadequacy of this data, we know that 86.7% of respondents completed at least some high school, 23.3% graduated from college or university, and 21.7% had some training at a technical/trade/business school.

34.6% of respondents stated that they had had problems with the school system when they were children ("discrimination", "language problems", "focus on competition bred animosity and class distinction" and "inadequate teachers").

However, 90% felt that education was important in making a good life for themselves and their children. 27.3% are currently students (full or part-time) and 76.4% have plans for furthering their education in the future. The most commonly noted fields of educational pursuit were social work, law, and business management/administration.

Respondents in higher income brackets were more likely to believe that education had helped them in employment. 42.9% of those with incomes under $30,000 and 57.1% of those with incomes over $30,000 thought their education had helped them to find and keep a job.

Production/Consumption of Goods:

Considering that almost all of the respondents live in the city, many of them demonstrate some degree of self-sufficiency in the production of goods for their families.

22.4% grow at least some of their own food, 3.3% raise livestock for consumption, 25% hunt, trap or fish, 68.3% do their own baking, 39.6% can and 70.2% freeze at least some of their own food. 31.7% produce at least some of their family's clothing, and 22% produce at least some other items for their home (i.e. furniture, curtains, renovations).

Most families are eating a well balanced diet, with meat and vegetables being a somewhat predominant diet.

23.3% have had to use the Food Bank at some time. Many of those on Social Allowance have used the Food Bank several times.

D. SOCIAL

Leisure Time:

Doing activities with family members is an important leisure activity to many respondents. This includes visiting with family members, watching children's activities/sports (i.e. hockey), helping children with homework, and participating in recreation with children. Walking, listening to music, writing and volunteer work were also common activities.

Other people listed things such as studying for school, housework and laundry as leisure activities. Several people stated that they did not have any leisure time at all, they were too busy with work and family responsibilities.

When asked what they would like to do for leisure activities if money or time were not a problem, most frequently stated that they would like to travel and learn more about the world. Others listed adventurous sports such as sky diving, downhill skiing, parachuting, and boxing.

Some would like to research Metis history and write books or movies about Metis history. Some would like to participate in opera, ballet and classical theatre. Many would like to be involved in physical activities that would promote their well being such as fitness club, swimming. Others would simply like to have more time to spend with friends/family.

Happiness:

90% of respondents felt happy with their life. Of those who did not feel happy, the majority stated that financial problems contributed to their unhappiness, "no job, no good education, in debt". Others stated that they were unhappy that they did not have enough time for their family, "too busy trying to survive". One person stated that she was unhappy "because my son died 2 months ago".

70% stated that they knew someone close to them (often immediate family members) who were not happy with their life. The reasons most often stated for this unhappiness were "can't deal with reality", "financial problems" and "relationship problems".

88.3% of respondents liked themselves most of the time. Their three wishes indicated this optimism for themselves and others. Their wishes included health for family members, happiness (especially for their children), leisure time to travel and spend with family, better financial situation to be able to better care for their family's needs, peace of mind, good weather, and world peace.

Family Unit:

Some responses to the question, "What is a family?" were a variation on the idea of "wife, kids, station wagon, home". Many included extended family members and the Metis community in their definition of family.

The other type of family definition looked at the relationships between people rather than how they were related to each other. Examples of this idea of family included:

"group of people with common goals, lifestyle, who work and live and love together"

"a unit of people - adults and children - learning and growing together, sharing love and emotional support and a safe comfortable place to be"

"where all strive to be the best we can on a daily basis, and materialism is not as important as love is in a family - sharing, caring, good and bad times"

"where we can all sit around playing guitars, cards, telling stories and just sharing and caring, as one big happy family gathering"

58 respondents answered the question "Who is your family?"

Relationship	Number	Percentage
siblings	51	85.0
children	50	83.3
grandparents/parents	40	66.7
uncles/aunts	40	66.7
cousins	40	66.7
friends	38	63.3
spouse	36	60.0
Metis community	30	51.7

57 respondents answered the question "How many brothers/ sisters do you have?". The other 3 had been raised away from their family and did not know how many siblings they had.

The average number was 7.1 siblings per respondent. Data for how many siblings their parents and grandparents had indicated slightly smaller family size in their parents' generation (an average of 6.7 siblings) and slightly larger family size for their grandparents' generation (7.3 siblings on average). However, many respondents did not know how many siblings their parents and/or grandparents had.

50 respondents indicated that they had children, with the average number being 3.1. This would indicate that family size has decreased by more than half in one generation.

63.3% of respondents indicated they had been raised by both of their natural parents. Of these, 15 had also been raised by other family members (i.e. grandparent), 3 had also been raised in mission schools, 4 had also been raised in foster care, and 1 had been adopted.

3 respondents had been raised by only their mother, 3 had also been raised by other relatives, and 3 had also been raised in foster care.

2 had been raised only by their grandparents, 1 was raised only by an aunt, 1 was raised only by foster parents, 1 was raised in a mission orphanage, and 3 were adopted.

Most respondents visits frequently with family members, and 90% stated that it is important to maintain a close relationship with their immediate family.

Household composition of respondents was varied. 21.7% of respondents lived in 2 parent homes with their minor children (under 18 years old), and 5% with their adult children (over 18 years old).

16.7% lived in 1 parent homes with their minor children, and 1.7% with adult children.

13.3% were adult couples either with no children, or whose children had all left home. 10% of respondents lived alone and 5% lived with a friend of the same sex.

Other households contained grandchildren (minor and adult), siblings of respondent (minor and adult), nieces and nephews (minor and adult), adult friends and their children, and/or the parents of respondents.

31/60 households contained minor children of respondents.

11/60 households contained minor extended family members (i.e. grandchildren, siblings of respondents, nieces or nephews) and/or minor children of friends. This represents 18.3% of all respondent households. This can be compared to a *U of A Population Lab Survey (1989)* where only 1.8% of respondents stated there were any children other than their own living with them.

10/60 households contained adult children of respondents.
4/60 households contained adult extended family members (i.e. grandchildren, siblings of respondents, nieces and/or nephews).

21/60 respondents reported that they had minor biological children who did not live with them. Of these, 38.1% lived with the respondent's ex-spouse, 28.5% lived with extended family members, 9.5% had been adopted, 4.8% were in foster care, 4.8% were in institutional care, 4.8% had died, and 9.5% of respondents did not answer the question.

Of the respondents reporting minor biological children residing out of their home, 73.3% reported that they visit these children frequently.

13.3% of respondents reported they had children who were/are involved with the Child Welfare system. Of these, 62.5% believed the social worker had treated them fairly and understood their needs and fears. 75% believed the social worker had clearly explained why Child Welfare was involved.

42/60 respondents reported that they currently had a relationship with a person of the opposite sex (spouse, boyfriend, etc.). Of these 90.5% reported that this relationship was based on partnership, friendship, love, etc. Many of these respondents had reported in other parts of the questionnaire that they had had several spouses, or problems of some sort in relationships previously. They had resolved these problems and were now enjoying a stable, happy relationship.

In response to the question "What childhood experiences have greatly influenced who you are today?", some respondents mentioned how the negative things in their childhood environment had affected them.

"Not an alcoholic because my father was one."

"Poverty, neglect."

"Unstable foster homes; sexual abuse (6 - 8 years old)"."

"Grew up on skidrow in Edmonton and saw a lot of criminal activities. I learned a lesson not to be like them."

"Growing up in the sixties with prejudice and discrimination; I feel made me stronger and more open-minded, and more of a caring person."

"Growing up in a non-native community - shame. Now I've earned pride of origins."

Other people talked about how the positive things in their childhood environment had affected them.

"My parents provided good care - lots of emphasis on health, education and spirituality."

"Father always insisted that we work for a living and parents taught us to respect elders, be responsible and I feel I am very fortunate to have all these qualities."

"I was born in what was called the dirty thirties. My parents were very poor, but remained honest and trustworthy and were respected in the white community."

"Watching and listening to grandmother, grandfather, aunties and uncles, strengths and lessons, modelling. Special influence of father - strong bond."

"I have had the opportunity to grow up in Metis/Native communities and was associated with many Metis/Native organizations."

Caring For And Maintaining Family Members:

There appeared to be a high degree of sharing of child rearing and household duties between respondents and spouses/other adult family members. 38 households contained minor children, grandchildren, nieces/nephews, etc. Of these, 73.7% reported a sharing of child rearing duties, i.e. discipline, taking children to activities/appointments, involvement with children's school work, daily care, etc.

40 respondents lived with at least one other adult. Of these, 82.5% reported a sharing of household duties such as shopping, laundry, yard maintenance, cleaning, cooking, etc.

65% of respondents reported that there was a spokesperson/ head of their household. Of these, 69.2% reported that the head of the household was female. Women most often represented the family to outside systems.

The *U of A Population Lab Survey (1989)* indicates that 87.3% of respondents agree that marriages would be more satisfying if men participated more actively in household and family roles. The data from our survey would indicate that Metis men are in fact participating in large numbers in household and family roles.

Spirituality/Religion:

90% of respondents stated that they believed in a god. 83.1% of respondents were raised in the Roman Catholic church, 10% in a Protestant faith, 3.3% were raised in both a Protestant faith and the Catholic church, and 1.7% reported that they had not been raised in any religious faith.

45% of respondents reported that they still practiced the faith that they were raised in.

90% of respondents said that they believed it was important for them to give moral/ethical training to their children.

Emotional:

The most commonly reported sources of stress in respondents lives were finances, lack of time for work and family, work/business pressures, child raising responsibilities, school work/exams, health of family

members, and relationship issues. Also mentioned were the death of family members, and dealing with bureaucracy and frustration with situations that one is helpless to change.

Respondents reported most frequently that they deal with stress by talking with a family member/friend, exercise/ walk, rest/sleep, relaxation/meditation, playing/listening to music, physical care of self (proper diet, long hot bath, sauna, massage), reminding themselves to stay calm/self-talk, and expression of feeling (laugh, cry, yell, get mad).

40% reported that they sometimes or often feel depressed. They reported the sources of their depression was most often finances, "not having control over situations such as stable employment", loneliness/missing an absent or deceased family member, problems with children, and society's demands.

48.3% of respondents reported that they sometimes or often feel lonely. These respondents were most often lonely because they did not have a relationship with a person of the opposite sex.

76.7% of respondents stated they can talk freely about their problems with others. Of these, 86.5% state they talk with close friends/relatives about their problems. 53.8% talk only to close friends/relatives. 26.9% also talk with their family doctor, 15.4% also talk with an elder, 13.5% also talk with a Metis/Native community worker, 9.6% also talk with a psychologist and 3.8% also talk with a clergyman.

The mostly common responses to the question "What do you think is the cause of emotional problems?" were family breakdown, loss of loved one/disaster, discrimination, unemployment, stress, poverty, and health problems.

60% of respondents reported that they knew someone close to them who had a mental illness. This data may not be accurate as a definition of mental illness was not provided.

90% of respondents believed that death should be talked about more openly. 86.7% of respondents knew someone close to them who had died within the last 2 years.

	SUICIDE	ALCOHOL /DRUG	FAMILY VIOLENCE	OTHER VIOLENCE	ACCIDENT	TERMINAL ILLNESS	UNKNOWN	OTHER	TOTAL	PERCENT
FAMILY	2	6	2	5	10	13	4	6	48	19.3
RELATIVE	2	14	3	6	11	19	3	4	62	24.9
METIS FRIEND	3	12	3	5	12	13	2	5	55	22.1
INDIAN FRIEND	3	6	2	4	11	9	2	4	32	12.9
OTHER FRIEND	3	9	2	4	10	11	2	2	43	17.3
TOTAL	13	47	12	24	54	56	13	21		
PERCENT	5.2	18.9	4.8	9.6	21.7	22.5	5.2	8.4		
TOTAL DEATHS OVERALL		249								
AVERAGE # OF DEATHS/RESPONDENT		5.3								

75% of respondents knew someone close to them who had talked about suicide and 66.7% knew someone close to them who had attempted and/or completed suicide. Of these, 85% were family members or other relatives.

63.3% of respondents had at some time thought about suicide and 30.8% had made at least one attempt. Of those who had attempted suicide in the past, 90.9% now like themselves. This would indicate a healing process.

56 people responded to the question about the suicide rate among Metis people. Of these, 91.1% agree that suicide was high among the Metis. The reasons they stated for this can be summarized as low self-esteem and loss of hope resulting from discrimination, abuse, no roots/loss of cultural identity, poverty, family breakdown and alcohol/drug use.

Respondents believed that the major problems facing Metis youth today are drugs/alcohol, family breakup, identity, delinquency and unemployment. Respondents believed that the major problems facing Metis adults today are family breakup, family violence, drugs/alcohol, unemployment and poverty.

25% of respondents stated that they were worried about their own future. The reasons they gave for being worried were finances and environmental issues (ozone layer, green house effect, nuclear war).

53.3% of respondents were worried about their children's future. Their reasons were environmental issues, lack of goals/direction and concern about children's education. Many were concerned their children might not be prepared for the complexity of modern life; "the world changes so fast and I don't want my children to get lost in it."

60% of respondents were worried about the future of someone close to them (most often a spouse or parents). The reasons were alcohol, health problems, violence and uncertainty in the future.

Most respondents were extremely optimistic about their life in the future. 86.5% believe that life will be better for them in 5 years. Some reasons given for this optimism were:

"Because I know I can change my life"

"More opportunities for Metis"

"I'll be finished school and working - more stable"

"Less pressure - more time for self"

Those who did not feel optimistic about the future expressed a common theme of environmental concern; "if we don't stop creating pollution at this rate, we won't have a future"

Relationship With Agencies:

65.5% of respondents believed that Metis people are reluctant to turn to service agencies for help. They felt that non-native agencies were not helpful, or they were private people, or they did not know what was available.

"The people that are representing the agency are ill informed in respect to Native people, and values. They try to fix you rather than understand you."

"Because services have been set up for/by another race. We have our own value system. Not relevant to our ways. These agencies learn from books. We learn from our own model."

"Feel threatened by whites. Don't trust them."

"Most agencies are run by whites who sneer at you."

"I solve my problems in my own way."

"Private people - don't want others to know what's happening."

"Pride - get help from family."

"Lack of resources. Some concern about agencies' sincerity or ability to help."

"Can't find the right counselling."

One person was critical of native agencies; "lack of trust, too many native agencies, too much nepotism."

The Law:

70% of respondents knew someone close to them who had been convicted of a criminal offense.

Family Violence:

75% of respondents knew someone close to them who had been physically abused by a spouse or other significant person (i.e. parent). 70% of respondents had been physically abused themselves at some time in their lives.

80% of respondents knew someone close to them who had been emotionally abused by a spouse or other significant person (i.e. parent). 86.7% of respondents had been emotionally abused themselves at some time in their lives.

46.9% of respondents knew someone close to them who had been sexually abused/assaulted. 38.3% of respondents reported that they had been sexually abused/assaulted themselves at some time in their lives.

Sexual abusers were reported to be 13.3% family member, 11.7% other relative, 8.3% friend, and 25% other (strangers, boyfriends).

30% of respondents reported that they had been physically abused as children. 40% reported emotional abuse as children, and 23.3% reported sexual abuse as children. However, 72.2%, 82.6% and 64.3% of those reporting physical, emotional and sexual abuse now feel happy with themselves and their life. This would indicate a considerable healing process.

Drug/Alcohol Use:

60% of respondents report that they drink alcohol socially. Another 4.5% report that they drink alcohol, but not socially. This group may be experiencing problems with their use of alcohol.

85% of respondents report that they know someone close to them whose use of drugs/alcohol is harming them/others. The effects of this drug/alcohol use were reported as poverty, violence, job problems, death, family breakup and health.

A change towards a more healthy attitude towards the use of alcohol was noted. 53.3% reported that in the past they had felt angry and/or depressed when they drank alcohol. Now only 13.3% report these feelings while using alcohol. In the past 55% reported that they harmed themselves and/or others in some way while drinking alcohol. Now only 11.7% report these behaviours while using alcohol.

Physical Health:

33.3% of respondents reported some type of medical problem. These problems ranged from asthma and allergies to physical disabilities, to heart problems and cancer. 45% of respondents reported that their children, spouse or other significant person (i.e sibling, parent) had medical problems or physical disability. These problems ranged from asthma and allergies to physical disabilities, to heart problems, lung problems, cancer and AIDS (2 responses).

86.7% of respondents had a family physician. 58.3% of them visited their doctor on a regular basis. 81.7% reported their family seldom got sick, and when they did, 81.7% stated that this illness was minor in nature (colds, flue).

35% of respondents said they see someone other than/in addition to a doctor when they have a health problem. 52.4% said they consult with family/friends for health advice.

85% felt they had been well treated by doctors and other health professionals. Those who weren't well treated felt put down and treated as second class persons.

35% of respondents said they knew someone with a terminal illness. 85.7% of those with a terminal illness were close family members. The types of illness were cancer, heart problems, lung problems and AIDS (2 responses).

5% of respondents knew someone well who had had a sexual sterilization operation against their will or who did not understand this type of operation.

35 of the 42 female respondents (83.3%) had been pregnant at least once. Of these, 51.4% experienced problems with their pregnancy and/or labour.

23.8% of female respondents stated that they would consider having an abortion if they believed that they could not provide a good life for the child. The 76.2% who said that they would not consider an abortion felt that life (particularly the life of their own child) was sacred.

E. COMMENTS

Many respondents added comments indicative of their feelings about the questionnaire and its use.

"The questionnaire is good, and the idea especially if something good comes out of it."

"I realize the committee put much effort into making up this questionnaire but I think that some of the questions brought out some negative feelings about ourselves."

"This questionnaire has made me more aware of the conditions affecting my family. I'm getting my kids back for me to care for."

"The questions were fairly general, could be clearer and some were repetitious." "Too long of a questionnaire."

"A very productive exercise, if done with good follow-up. A good cross section of information - very thorough."

"Some of the personal questions, i.e. drug abuse, suicide, emotional, don't really 'fit' with the rest of the questionnaire. Had I not known and respected the person who interviewed me, I would not have answered these categories because they are mis-leading and intrusive."

"Don't waste time or money if you are not going to utilize survey - follow through with it instead of letting it lie there like every other report."

"Its about time something was done for Metis - betterment of future leaders - children and grandchildren."

"I've come a long way from where I used to be to where I am today. Thanks for showing me all the things I've overcome in my life."

"Thank you for the questionnaire, it has made things a lot more clearer and understandable for me. I give my best to you people who put this together and hopefully our concerns as Metis people are met and dealt with for our children's future."

Appendix A

QUESTIONNAIRE
Significant Issues Affecting Metis Families Today

A. PROFILE

1. Please mark respondents sex: Female_____ Male_____

2. How old are you? _____

3. Are you: Metis _____
Bill C31 _____
Status Indian _____

4. Where do you currently live? (community)_____

5. Where were you born? (community)_____
(province)_____

6. What is your current marital status?
Single (never married) _____
Married _____
Widowed _____
Separated _____
Divorced _____
Common-law _____

B. CULTURAL

This section deals with the cultural aspects of Metis Society.

LANGUAGE/IDENTITY/HISTORY/EVENTS/ROLE MODEL

7. What language do you/your parents speak?

	Yourself	Your Mother	Your Father
Cree	_____	_____	_____
Chipewyan	_____	_____	_____
English	_____	_____	_____
French	_____	_____	_____
Metis Dialects:			
Cree/French	_____	_____	_____
Michif/Cree	_____	_____	_____
Michif/French	_____	_____	_____
Others (specify)_____	_____	_____	_____

8. Which language do you speak most often? _____

9. In your own thinking and in your own words, what does Metis mean to you?
_____
_____

10. a) Do you consider yourself to be Metis?
Yes_____ No_____
b) Are you proud to be Metis? Yes_____ No_____

11. Was there ever a point in your life when you wondered about yourself and your identity as a Metis person?
_____
_____

12. In your opinion, is it important that Metis people maintain their cultural identity?
Yes_____ No_____

13. Do you participate (doing) in Metis Cultural events?
Yes_____ No_____

14. a) Have you ever attended (watched) any Metis cultural events? Yes_____ No_____

b) If yes, how often in the last year?
Every opportunity _____
Once in awhile _____
Hardly ever _____

15. a) Have you ever been discriminated against because are Metis or of Indian descent?
Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, how did you deal with this discrimination?
_____
c) If yes, how would you deal with this situation today?
_____
d) If yes, how would these experiences have affected you today?
_____

16. Do you consider yourself to have good knowledge of Metis culture?
Yes, why? _____
No, why? _____

17. a) Are you familiar with the origins of Metis people?
Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, in your own opinion, what is the most significant event in Metis History?
_____

18. What traditions distinct to Metis culture do you practice?
Facial expressions (pointing with lips) _____
Picking berries _____
Hunting _____
Fishing _____
Trapping _____
Fiddling _____
Jigging _____
Foods _____
Arts & Crafts _____
Other (specify)_____

19. Are you involved in the Metis Community?
Always _____
Frequently _____
Sometimes _____
Seldom _____
Never _____

20. Do you think there are enough Metis cultural activities in your community?
Yes_____ No_____

21. How do you find out about Metis cultural events in your community?
_____

22. Do you, or did you ever have a role model?
Yes_____ No_____
If yes, who/why? _____

23. Do you have any Metis role models?
Yes_____ No_____
If yes, who/why? _____

24. a) Were you taught about the role of Metis and Indians in Canadian History?
Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, did what you were taught have any affect on your identity as a Metis or Indian person?
Yes_____ No_____

FAMILY LINEAGE CHART

35. Please fill in the following lineage chart showing racial origin.

Grandfather (Natural Father)	Grandmother (Natural Father)	Grandfather (Natural Mother)	Grandmother (Natural Mother)

Father (Natural) | Mother (Natural)

You

MOBILITY

Community means place of residence, i.e. Metis Settlement, municipality, town, city.

36. How long have you been living in this community?

Less than 1 month	_____
Less than 1 year	_____
2 - 4 years	_____
5 - 10 years	_____
10 years or more	_____
All your life	_____

37. In how many different communities have you lived in your lifetime? _____

38. If you presently live in a different community than the one you were raised in, which of the following applies: (check as many as apply)

RAISED		MOVED TO	
Town	_____	Town	_____
City	_____	City	_____
Rural	_____	Rural	_____

39. Why did you leave the community you were raised in?

_____

_____

RIGHTS

40. a) Are you eligible for treaty status?
Yes _____ No _____
b) If yes, have you applied for it?
Yes _____ No _____
c) If yes, do you still consider yourself Metis? ____
Or Indian? ____

C. ECONOMIC

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

41. Where are you currently living?

Own home	_____
Rent home	_____
Apartment	_____
Room & Board	_____
Other (specify)	_____

42. How much rent/mortgage do you pay a month?

0 -200	_____
201 - 400	_____
401 - 500	_____
501 - 600	_____
601 - 700	_____
701 +	_____

33. Excluding yourself, how many people reside with you?_____

34. How many bedrooms are in your home? _____

35. a) How satisfied are you with your accommodations?
(Please select one response)
Very satisfied _____
Satisfied _____
Dissatisfied _____
Very dissatisfied _____
b) If not satisfied, why not? _____
_____

36. a) Have you ever had a problem in finding a place to live?
Yes _____ No_____
b) If yes:
Discrimination _____
Rents too high _____
Not enough accommodation available _____
No children allowed _____
Other reason (specify)_____

37. a) Have you ever been evicted from your accommodations?
Yes _____ No_____
b) If yes, why? _____

38. a) Have you ever been homeless?
Yes _____ No_____
b) If yes, where did you stay?_____
_____
c) If yes, how long were you homeless?_____

LIVELIHOOD

39. What is your present employment situation?
Full time employment _____
Part time employment _____
Unemployed _____
Homemaker _____
Student _____
Retired _____
Unable to work due to illness or disability _____
Other (specify) _____

40. If working, what type of work?
Professional _____
Administration _____
Management _____
Trades _____
Service Industry _____
Labour _____
Farming _____
Trapping/Fishing _____
Other (specify)_____

41. If working, what is your wage? Yearly _____

42. a) If working, are you satisfied with your job?
Yes _____ No_____
b) If no, specify _____

43. a) If working, are you working at a job that is your career choice? Yes _____ No_____
b) If no, what is your career choice? _____

44. If not working, what is your means of living?
Student _____
Alimony _____
Social Allowance _____
Pension _____
Disability Pension _____
Assured Income for Severely Handicapped _____
Other (specify) _____

45. What is your annual combined family income? _____

46. Is your total family income able to adequately support your family? Yes_____ No_____

47. a) If not working, are you looking for work?
Yes_____ No_____
b) If not working, what type of work are you looking for? _____

48. a) If you are receiving social allowance, how long?_____
b) If you are receiving social allowance, what is your monthly income?_____
c) Does this income meet your basic needs? Yes_____ No_____
d) If no, why not? _____

49. Do you consider yourself poor at the present?
Yes_____ No_____

50. Did you ever consider yourself poor in the past?
Yes_____ No_____

51. What do you need to improve your financial situation?
_____

52. Are you confident that your financial situation will get better? Yes_____ No_____

53. a) Do you have a monthly budget plan for how you will spend your money? Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, how well does it work? _____

54. a) Do you have a bank account? Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, for what reasons do you use your bank account?
Cashing cheques _____
Writing cheques _____
Savings _____
Credit cards/Bank loans _____

55. When you cash a cheque, do you leave a deposit in your account to carry you through to your next deposit?
Yes_____ No_____

56. If you use services other than a bank to cash your cheque, which services do you use?
Money Mart _____
Other, (specify)_____

57. a) Have you ever sold your income tax?
Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, how often _____

EDUCATION/TRAINING

58. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
Grade 1 - 8 _____
Grade 9 - 12 _____
College/University/Undergraduate _____
College/University/Graduate _____
Technical Institute _____
Other (specify)_____

59. a) In your opinion, while attending school, did you have any problems with the school system?
Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, what problems? _____
_____

60. If working, did your education help you find and hold a job?
Yes_____ No_____

61. a) Do you consider education relevant in making a good life for yourself and your family? Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, to what level: Grade 12 _____ College_____
University_____ Technical_____

62. a) Are you presently a student? Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, are you attending: Full time_____ Part time_____
c) If yes, for what purpose?
Upgrading _____
College _____
University _____
Technical _____

63. a) Do you have any future plans for furthering your education? Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, what course of study? _____
c) If yes, what problems or obstacles do you foresee?
_____

PRODUCTION & CONSUMPTION OF FOODS

64. a) Do you grow any of the food you eat? Yes___No___
b) If yes, specify: vegetables____fruit____Other___

65. How much of your food do you buy?
All _____
Most _____
Half _____
Very little _____
None _____

66. a) Do you raise any livestock for personal consumption?
Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, which animals? _____
c) If yes, what products do you consume from these animals?
Eggs____Dairy____Meat____Other____

67. a) Do you hunt, trap or fish for personal use?
Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, which animals? _____
c) If yes, products used for: Meat___Furs___Other__

68. a) Do you do any of your own baking? Yes___No___
b) If yes, what products? Pastry___Breads___Other__

69. a) Do you do any canning? Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, what products? Fruit____ Vegetables___ Meat____
Other____

70. a) Do you do any freezing? Yes_____No_____
b) If yes, what products? Fruit____ Vegetables___ Meat____
Other____

71. What is your family's main diet? (Probe: Fruit, dairy products, meats, and vegetables)
_____

72. a) Where do you most often shop for your food?
Supermarket _____
Farmers Market _____
Convenience Store _____
Wholesale _____
b) If yes, how often _____

73. a) Do you ever use the Food Bank? Yes____No____
b) If yes, how often _____

74. How often do you eat in Restaurants? Daily _____
Weekly _____
Monthly _____
Rarely _____

75. a) How often does your family eat fast foods? Daily _____
Weekly _____
Monthly _____
Rarely _____
b) If so, what type: Frozen _____
Take out _____
Other _____

76. How often does your family eat snack foods? (Probe: chips, pop, chocolate bars)
Daily _____
Weekly _____
Monthly _____
Rarely _____

77. How often do you purchase fruits or fruit juices:
Never _____
Rarely _____
Sometimes _____
Often _____
Always _____

78. How often do you purchase dairy products?
Never _____
Rarely _____
Sometimes _____
Often _____
Always _____

79. a) Do you sew, knit or crochet any clothes for your family?
Yes _____ No _____
b) If yes, which ones? _____

80. How do you acquire your clothing? (check as many as apply)
Clothing Stores _____
Make Myself _____
Second Hand Stores _____
Thrift Stores _____
Donated _____
Other _____

81. Are you able to adequately provide clothing for your family?
Yes _____ No _____

82. a) Do you make any other items for your home? (Probe: Furnishings, pottery, jewelry) Yes _____ No _____
b) If yes, what type of items? _____

83. What types of transportation services do you usually use?
Public Transit _____
Own Vehicle _____
Taxi _____
Greyhound _____
Rail _____
Air _____

84. What other personal or home services do you use?
Hair Salon _____ Housekeeping _____ Other _____

D. SOCIAL

LEISURE TIME

85. In a typical week, what do you do during your free time?

List Activities	Time Spent on Activity
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

86. What additional activities would you like to do if you had the time and/or the money?
_____
_____

87. How often do you spend time visiting/talking with family members in your home? _____

HAPPINESS

88. a) In general, do you feel happy with your life?
Yes _____ No _____
b) If no, what are some reasons for not feeling happy?
_____
_____

89. a) Do you know of someone, close to you, that is not happy with their life? Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, who is this person? (Check as many as apply)

Your child/ren	_____
Your spouse	_____
Your mother	_____
Your father	_____
Your grandmother	_____
Your grandfather	_____
Your relatives	_____(cousins, aunts, uncles, etc.)
Close friend	_____
Other (specify)	_____

c) If yes, why do you think they are not happy?
_____
_____

90. a) Do you like yourself most of the time?
Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, what things do you like about yourself?
_____
_____
c) If no, what things do you not like about yourself?
_____
d) If you wanted to change something about yourself, what would you change?_____
_____

91. Imagine you could have three wishes, what would you wish for? List in order of priority and your reason for these wishes:

WISH	REASON FOR WISH
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

FAMILY UNIT

92. In your own thinking and in your own words, what is a family?_____
_____
_____

93. Who do you consider to be your family? (Check as many as apply)

Children	_____
Spouse	_____
Brothers/Sisters	_____
Cousins	_____
Aunts	_____
Uncles	_____
Grandparent(s)	_____
Friends	_____
Metis/Indian Community	_____

94. How many brothers/sisters do you have?

	Brothers		Sisters
Natural	_____	Natural	_____
Half	_____	Half	_____
Adopted (custom)	_____	Adopted (custom)	_____

95. How many brothers/sisters did your mother have?_____

96. How many brothers/sisters did your father have?_____

97. If you had a step-parent (mother or fathers), how many brothers/sisters did they have?_____

98. How many brothers/sisters did your grandparents have?

Paternal Grandmother	_____
Paternal Grandfather	_____
Maternal Grandmother	_____
Maternal Grandfather	_____

99. Who raised you as a child, and who raised your parents?

	Yourself	Your Father	Your Mother
Mother	_____	_____	_____
Father	_____	_____	_____
Stepmother	_____	_____	_____
Stepfather	_____	_____	_____
Grandmother	_____	_____	_____
Grandfather	_____	_____	_____
Aunts	_____	_____	_____
Uncles	_____	_____	_____
Cousins	_____	_____	_____
Nephews	_____	_____	_____
Nieces	_____	_____	_____
Foster Parents	_____	_____	_____
Adopted Parents	_____	_____	_____
Other (specify)_____	_____	_____	_____

100. a) How often do you see your parents/guardians?
Weekly _____
Monthly _____
Annually _____
Never _____
Not Applicable _____
b) How often do you visit with your brothers/sisters?
Weekly _____
Monthly _____
Annually _____
Never _____
Not Applicable _____

101. Is it important to you to maintain a close relationship with your immediate family? Yes_____ No_____

102. Could you please tell me about the people living with you? I would like to know their relationship to you, age and sex.

	Relationship	Age	Sex
Person	_____	_____	_____
Person	_____	_____	_____
Person	_____	_____	_____
Person	_____	_____	_____
Person	_____	_____	_____
Person	_____	_____	_____
Person	_____	_____	_____

103. a) Do you have any natural children who do not live with you?
Yes _____ No _____
b) If yes, what age and sex are they?

	Age	Sex
1st child	_____	_____
2nd child	_____	_____
3rd child	_____	_____
4th child	_____	_____
5th child	_____	_____

104. If any of your children live outside of your care, where do they live?

	# OF CHILDREN
Spouse	_____
Extended Family	_____
Adoption	_____
Group Home	_____
Foster Home	_____
Institution (youth centre, mental, etc.)	_____
Other (specify)_____	_____

105. If your child/ren are out of your home, how often are you able to visit?
Daily _____
Weekly _____
Monthly _____
Yearly _____
No Contact _____

106. For each of your natural children, what relationship does their natural parent (natural mother/natural father) have to you?

	MARRIED	COMMON-LAW	OTHER
1st child	_____	_____	_____
2nd child	_____	_____	_____
3rd child	_____	_____	_____
4th child	_____	_____	_____
5th child	_____	_____	_____

107. a) Do you have any children that are currently or have been involved in the Child Welfare system? Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, in general did you feel that the social worker treated you fairly? Yes_____ No_____
c) If yes, in general did you feel that the social worker understood your needs, fears, problems or concerns?
Yes_____ No_____
d) If yes, did the social worker explain things clearly so that you understood why Child Welfare was involved?
Yes_____ No_____

108. a) Have you ever been in a common-law relationship?
Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, how many times? _____

109. a) Have you ever been married? Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, how many times? _____

110. Is your current relationship (marriage/common-law) based on any of the following? (Check as many as apply)

Partnership	_____
Best friends	_____
Hostility	_____
Sexuality	_____
Finances	_____
Children	_____
Other (specify)	_____

111. In looking back, what kinds of childhood experiences have greatly influenced or effected who you are today?_____
_____
_____
_____

CARING FOR AND MAINTAINING FAMILY MEMBERS

112. In your family unit, who does each of the following tasks:
(Check as many as apply)

	Yourself	Spouse	Other Adult	Older Child
Discipline of children	____	_____	_____	_____
Daily care of children	____	_____	_____	_____
Helping children with homework	____	_____	_____	_____
Taking children to activities	____	_____	_____	_____
Meeting with children's teacher	____	_____	_____	_____
Taking children to appointment (medical, dental, etc.)	____	_____	_____	_____
Miscellaneous activities	____	_____	_____	_____

113. In your family unit, who does each of the following:
(Check as many as apply)

	Yourself	Spouse	Other Adult	Older Child
Cooking	____	_____	_____	_____
Grocery shopping	____	_____	_____	_____
Clothing shopping	____	_____	_____	_____
Household shopping	____	_____	_____	_____
Paying bills	____	_____	_____	_____
Laundry	____	_____	_____	_____
House/Yard maintenance	____	_____	_____	_____
Contributes to family income	____	_____	_____	_____

114. a) In your family unit, do you have a head of the family that is the family spokesperson? Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, who is this spokesperson?
Yourself____ Spouse____ Other Adult____ Child____

115. In your family unit, who cares for or provides maintenance and care for the older family members?
Yourself____ Spouse____ Other Adult____ Child____ Other____

SPIRITUALITY/RELIGION

116. a) Do you believe in a god?
Yes_____ No_____
b) In what faith were you raised?_____
c) Do you still practice this faith?
Yes_____ No_____

117. Do you think it is important for you to give moral/ethical training to your children? Yes_____ No_____

EMOTIONAL

Everyone experiences stress in their daily lives because of the good and bad demands placed on us from within and outside our home. When stress is mixed with worry, frustration, and tension it adds up to distress. I will be asking you some questions about how you deal with stress and distress.

118. In your own thinking and in your own words, what is most stressful in your daily life?
_____
_____

119. Can you tell me some ways you deal with stress?
_____
_____

120. a) How often do you feel depressed? Never_____ Seldom_____
Sometimes_____ Often_____ Always_____
b) If you feel depressed, what causes this?
_____

121. How often do you feel lonely? Never_____ Seldom_____
Sometimes_____ Often_____ Always_____

122. Are you able to talk freely about your problems with others?
Yes_____ No_____

123. Who do you see for help with an emotional problem?
(Check as many as apply)

Community worker	_____
Elder	_____
Family doctor	_____
Close friend/relative	_____
Social worker	_____
Nurse	_____
Marriage counsellor	_____
Psychologist	_____
Psychiatrist	_____
Clergy	_____
Other (specify)_____	

124. What do you think is the cause(s) of emotional problems?
(Check as many items as you wish)

Loss of loved one/disaster	
Family breakdown	
Discrimination	_____
Unemployment	_____
Work-related stress	_____
Poverty	_____
Difficulties with legal system	_____
Difficulties with education	_____
Difficulties with Social Services	_____
Health problems	_____
Other (specify) _____	_____

125. Do you know someone close to you who has, or has had a mental illness? (Check as many as apply)

	YES	NO
Immediate family	_____	_____
Relative	_____	_____
Yourself	_____	_____
Metis friend	_____	_____
Indian friend	_____	_____
Other friend	_____	_____

In this part of the interview I will be focussing on death. Because death is a sensitive issue, you may find it hard to answer some questions. I hope you'll feel free to tell me, however, if you feel uncomfortable. If you don't want to answer a question please stop me at anytime. Again, please remember that everything you say is confidential.

126. Do you think death should be talked about more openly?
Yes_____ No_____

127. a) Do you know someone close to you who has died within the last two years?

	YES	NO
Immediate family	_____	_____
Relative	_____	_____
Metis friend	_____	_____
Indian friend	_____	_____
Other friend	_____	_____

b) If yes, was their death related to:

Suicide	_____
Alcohol/drug-related	_____
Family violence	_____
Other violence	_____
Accidental death	_____
Terminal illness	_____
Unknown cause of death	_____
Other (specify)_____	

128. a) Without mentioning any names, do you know someone who has talked about suicide? Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, how many people do you know of that have talked about, attempted or completed suicide?

TALKED ABOUT SUICIDE	SUICIDE ATTEMPT	COMPLETED SUICIDE
_____	_____	_____

c) Out of these people that you know that have attempted suicide, were any of these your family members or friends?
Yes_____ No_____

129. a) Most of us have thought about suicide for a moment at some time in our lives. Have you ever thought about hurting yourself or have you ever actually attempted suicide?

	THOUGHT ABOUT IT	ATTEMPTED SUICIDE
YES	_____	_____
NO	_____	_____

b) If you have attempted suicide in the past, can you tell me approximately how many attempts you've made?

1 - 2	_____
3 - 5	_____
6 - 10	_____
11 +	_____

130. Suicide among Metis and Indian people is extremely high. What do you think may have contributed towards this?_____
_____

131. What are the major problems facing Metis and Indian YOUTH today? (Place a 1 by the most important problem, a 2 by the second most important problem, and a 3 by the third most important problem.)

Family break-up problems	_____
Drugs, alcohol and solvent abuse	_____
Juvenile delinquency	_____
Peer pressure	_____
Discrimination	_____
Identity problems	_____
School problems	_____
Poor education	_____
Unemployment	_____
Other (specify)_____	

132. What are the major problems facing Metis and Indian ADULTS today? (Place a 1 by the most important problem, a 2 by the second most important problem, and a 3 by the third most important problem.)

Family violence	_____
Child welfare involvement	_____
Family break-up problems	_____
Identity problems	_____
Personal emotional problems	_____
Drugs, alcohol and solvent abuse	_____
Poverty	_____
Unemployment	_____
Discrimination	_____
Other (specify)_____	

133. a) Are you worried about your future?
Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, what worries you?_____
_____
c) If you have children, are you worried about their future? Yes_____ No_____
d) If yes, what worries you?_____
_____

134. a) Are you worried about the future of someone close to you? (family, friend) Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, what things worry you?_____
_____

135. a) Do you think life for you will be better for you in five (5) years? Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, why?_____
c) If no, why not?_____

RELATIONSHIP WITH AGENCIES

136. Metis and Indian people are often reluctant to turn to service agencies for help.
a) Is this true in your own experience? YES____NO____
b) If yes, why?_____
_____
_____

THE LAW

137. a) Do you know of someone close to you who has been convicted of a criminal offense? Yes____ No____
b) If yes, what relationship were they to you and were they incarcerated?

	Convicted	Incarcerated
Immediate family	_____	_____
Relative(s)	_____	_____
Metis friend	_____	_____
Indian friend	_____	_____
Other friend	_____	_____
Yourself	_____	_____

138. If you or someone close to you has been arrested or jailed, where you or they treated fairly by:

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Police	_____	_____	_____
Courts	_____	_____	_____
Lawyers	_____	_____	_____

139. If you have ever needed a lawyer, did you ever have any problems getting one? Yes_____ No_____

FAMILY VIOLENCE

140. a) Have you or someone close to you ever been physically abused by a spouse or significant other?
Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, what relationship are they to you and when did it happen?

	As a Child	As a Adult	Happening Now
Yourself	_____	_____	_____
Immediate family	_____	_____	_____
Other relatives	_____	_____	_____
Friend	_____	_____	_____
Other (specify)	_____	_____	_____

141. a) Emotional abuse can mean rejection, deprivation of affection, exposure to domestic violence, inappropriate criticism, threats, humiliation, accusations or expectations.

Have you or someone close to you ever been emotionally abused by a spouse or significant other?
Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, what relationship are they to you and when did it happen?

	As a Child	As an Adult	Happening Now
Yourself			
Immediate family			
Other relatives			
Friend			
Other (specify)			

142. a) Have you or someone close to you ever been forced into any sexual situation? Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, what relationship are they to you and when did it happen?

	As a Child	As an Adult	Happening Now
Yourself			
Immediate family			
Other relative			
Friend			
Other (specify)			

c) What relationship was the abuser(s) to you?
Immediate family _____
Other relative _____
Friend _____
Other (specify)_____

DRUGS/ALCOHOL USE AND SOLVENT ABUSE

143. a) Do you drink alcohol? Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, do you generally drink in social situations?
Yes_____ No_____

144. a) Does someone close to you use drugs, alcohol or solvents in a way that you think is harming their life?
Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, what is their relationship to you?
Yourself _____
Immediate family _____
Metis friend _____
Indian friend _____
Other friend _____
c) If yes, what are the harmful effects?
Family violence _____
Child welfare involvement _____
Family break-up _____
Poverty _____
Personal health problems _____
Involvement with the law _____
Depression _____
Unemployment _____
Promiscuity _____
Job related problems _____
Death _____
Other (specify)_____

145. If you did, or do, drink alcohol or use drugs, were you/are you usually feeling:

	Past	Present
Depressed		
Angry		
Happy		
Other (specify)_____		

146. If you did, or do, drink alcohol or use drugs, were you/would you be likely to do any of the following:

	Past	Present
Physical fighting with family members	_____	_____
Physical fighting with others	_____	_____
Hurting yourself	_____	_____
Promiscuity	_____	_____
Attempted suicide	_____	_____
Other (specify)_____	_____	_____

PHYSICAL HEALTH

147. Do you have health care insurance coverage?
Yes_____ No_____

148. a) Do you have any medical problems or physical disability? (Probe: diabetic, asthma, etc.) Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, what are the medical problems?_____
_____

149. a) Do your children, spouse or other significant person have any medical problems or a physical disability?
Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, what are the medical problems?_____
_____

150. Are you or another family member currently taking any medication prescribed by a doctor?

	Yes	No
Yourself	_____	_____
Family member	_____	_____

151. Where do you go for health care when you need it?
_____

152. Do you have a family physician? Yes_____ No_____

153. How often do you see a doctor?

Do not have a family doctor	_____
Whenever necessary	_____
Once a month	_____
Once every 1 - 6 months	_____
Once every 7 - 12 months	_____

154. How often does your family get physically sick?_____

155. What are the most common health problems that your family would have?_____
_____

156. a) Is there anyone you go to for support/help, other than a doctor/hospital, when you are not feeling well?
Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, who would you see?_____
c) If yes, how often would you see this person?_____

157. a) Have you been treated well while at a doctor's clinic or hospital? Yes_____ No_____
b) If no, what problems did you experience?_____
_____

158. a) Does anyone close to you have a terminal illness?
Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, what relationship are they to you and what type of illness do they have?

	Type of Illness
Yourself	_____
Immediate family	_____
Relatives	_____
Metis friend	_____
Indian friend	_____
Other friend	_____

159. Do you know someone well who has had a sexual sterilization operation against their will or did not understand this type of operation? Yes_____ No_____

160. Have you or any immediate family member ever had any sexually transmitted disease? (Probe: V.D., AIDS, etc.)
Yes_____ No_____

This next series of questions applies only to women.

161. a) Have you ever been pregnant? Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, did you have any difficulty with your pregnancy? (Probe: toxemia, miscarriage, difficult labour, etc.)
Yes_____ No_____

162. a) Would you ever consider having an abortion?
Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, why would you have an abortion?_____
_____
c) If no, why not?_____
_____

Comments

1. Has this questionnaire made you more aware of the conditions affecting your family?
_____
_____
_____
_____

2. a) Do you think these questions were too personal?
Yes_____ No_____
b) If yes, why?_____
_____
_____

3. Do you have any other comments you would like to make?
_____
_____
_____
_____

This interview has taken a lot of your time and we really appreciate your willingness to help us out. Thank you very much!